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KENELM CHILLINGLY

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KENELM CHILLINGLY

HIS

ADVENTURES AND OPINIONS

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'THE CAXTONS,' &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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KENELM CHILLINGLY.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

SIR PETER had not heard from Kenelm since a letter informing him that his son had left town on an excursion, which would probably be short, though it might last a few weeks ; and the good Baronet now resolved to go to London himself, take his chance of Kenelm's return, and if still absent, at least learn from Mivers and others how far that very eccentric planet had contrived to steer a regular course amidst the fixed stars of the metropolitan system. He had other reasons for his

journey. He wished to make the acquaintance of Gordon Chillingly before handing him over the £20,000 which Kenelm had released in that resettlement of estates, the necessary deeds of which the young heir had signed before quitting London for Moleswick. Sir Peter wished still more to see Cecilia Travers, in whom Kenelm's accounts of her had inspired a very strong interest.

The day after his arrival in town Sir Peter breakfasted with Mivers.

"Upon my word you are very comfortable here," said Sir Peter, glancing at the well-appointed table, and round the well-furnished rooms.

"Naturally so—there is no one to prevent my being comfortable. I am not married:—taste that omelette."

"Some men declare they never knew comfort till they were married, cousin Mivers."

"Some men are reflecting bodies, and catch a pallid gleam from the comfort which a wife concentrates on herself. With a fortune so modest and secure, what comforts, pos-

sessed by me now, would not a Mrs Chillingly Mivers ravish from my hold and appropriate to herself! Instead of these pleasant rooms, where should I be lodged? In a dingy den looking on a backyard, excluded from the sun by day and vocal with cats by night; while Mrs Mivers luxuriated in two drawing-rooms with southern aspect and perhaps a boudoir. My brougham would be torn from my uses and monopolized by 'the angel of my hearth,' clouded in her crinoline and halved by her chignon. No! if ever I marry—and I never deprive myself of the civilities and needlework which single ladies waste upon me, by saying I shall not marry—it will be when women have fully established their rights; for then, men may have a chance of vindicating their own. Then, if there are two drawing-rooms in the house, I shall take one, if not, we will toss up who shall have the back parlour; if we keep a brougham, it will be exclusively mine three days in the week; if Mrs M. wants £200 a year for her wardrobe, she must be

contented with one, the other half will belong to my personal decoration ; if I am oppressed by proof sheets and printers' devils, half of the oppression falls to her lot, while I take my holiday on the croquet ground at Wimbledon. Yes, when the present wrongs of women are exchanged for equality with men—I will cheerfully marry ; and to do the thing generous, I will not oppose Mrs M.'s voting in the vestry or for Parliament. I will give her my own votes with pleasure."

"I fear, my dear cousin, that you have infected Kenelm with your selfish ideas on the nuptial state. He does not seem inclined to marry—Eh ?"

"Not that I know of."

"What sort of girl is Cecilia Travers ?"

"One of those superior girls who are not likely to tower into that terrible giantess called 'a superior woman.' A handsome, well educated, sensible young lady. Not spoilt by being an heiress—in fine, just the sort of girl whom you could desire to fix on for a daughter-in-law."

“And you don’t think Kenelm has a fancy for her?”

“Honestly speaking—I do not.”

“Any counter-attraction? There are some things in which sons do not confide in their fathers. You have never heard that Kenelm has been a little wild?”

“Wild he is, as the noble savage who ran in woods,” said cousin Mivers.

“You frighten me!”

“Before the noble savage ran across the squaws, and was wise enough to run away from them. Kenelm has run away now, somewhere.”

“Yes, he does not tell me where, nor do they know at his lodgings. A heap of notes on his table and no directions where they are to be forwarded. On the whole, however, he has held his own in London society—Eh?”

“Certainly! he has been more courted than most young men, and perhaps more talked of. Oddities generally are.”

“You own he has talents above the

average? Do you not think he will make a figure in the world some day, and discharge that debt to the literary stores or the political interests of his country, which alas, I and my predecessors, the other Sir Peters, failed to do; and for which I hailed his birth and gave him the name of Kenelm?"

"Upon my word," answered Mivers—who had now finished his breakfast, retreated to an easy chair, and taken from the chimney-piece one of his famous trabucos,—“upon my word I can’t guess; if some great reverse of fortune befell him, and he had to work for his livelihood, or if some other direful calamity gave a shock to his nervous system and jolted it into a fussy fidgety direction, I dare say he might make a splash in that current of life which bears men on to the grave. But you see he wants, as he himself very truly says, the two stimulants to definite action—poverty and vanity.”

“Surely there have been great men who were neither poor nor vain?”

“I doubt it. But vanity is a ruling

motive that takes many forms and many aliases—call it ambition, call it love of fame, still its substance is the same—the desire of applause carried into fussiness of action.”

“There may be the desire for abstract truth without care for applause.”

“Certainly. A philosopher on a desert island may amuse himself by meditating on the distinction between light and heat. But if on returning to the world, he publish the result of his meditations, vanity steps in, and desires to be applauded.”

“Nonsense, cousin Mivers, he may rather desire to be of use and benefit to mankind. You don’t deny that there is such a thing as philanthropy.”

“I don’t deny that there is such a thing as humbug. And whenever I meet a man who has the face to tell me, that he is taking a great deal of trouble, and putting himself very much out of his way, for a philanthropical object, without the slightest idea of reward either in praise or pence, I know that I have a humbug before me—a dan-

gerous humbug—a swindling humbug—a fellow with his pocket full of villainous prospectuses and appeals to subscribers.”

“Pooh, pooh; leave off that affectation of cynicism; you are not a bad-hearted fellow—you must love mankind—you must have an interest in the welfare of posterity.”

“Love mankind? Interest in posterity? Bless my soul, Cousin Peter, I hope you have no prospectuses in *your* pockets; no schemes for draining the Pontine Marshes out of pure love to mankind; no propositions for doubling the income tax, as a reserve fund for posterity, should our coalfields fail three thousand years hence. Love of mankind! Rubbish! This comes of living in the country.”

“But you do love the human race—you do care for the generations that are to come.”

“I! Not a bit of it. On the contrary, I rather dislike the human race, taking it altogether, and including the Australian bushmen; and I don’t believe any man who tells me that he would grieve half as much

if ten millions of human beings were swallowed up by an earthquake at a considerable distance from his own residence, say Abyssinia, as he would for a rise in his butcher's bills. As to posterity, who would consent to have a month's fit of the gout or tic-douloureux in order that in the fourth thousand year, A.D., posterity should enjoy a perfect system of sewage?"

Sir Peter, who had recently been afflicted by a very sharp attack of neuralgia, shook his head, but was too conscientious not to keep silence.

"To turn the subject," said Mivers, relighting the cigar which he had laid aside while delivering himself of his amiable opinions, "I think you would do well, while in town, to call on your old friend Travers, and be introduced to Cecilia. If you think as favourably of her as I do, why not ask father and daughter to pay you a visit at Exmundham? Girls think more about a man when they see the place which he can offer to them as a home, and Ex-

mundham is an attractive place to girls—picturesque and romantic.”

“A very good idea,” cried Sir Peter, heartily. “And I want also to make the acquaintance of Chillingly Gordon. Give me his address.”

“Here is his card on the chimney-piece, take it; you will always find him at home till two o’clock. He is too sensible to waste the forenoon in riding out in Hyde Park with young ladies.”

“Give me your frank opinion of that young kinsman. Kenelm tells me that he is clever and ambitious.”

“Kenelm speaks truly. He is not a man who will talk stuff about love of mankind and posterity. He is of our day, with large keen wide-awake eyes, that look only on such portions of mankind as can be of use to him—and do not spoil their sight by poring through cracked telescopes, to catch a glimpse of posterity. Gordon is a man to be a Chancellor of the Exchequer, perhaps a Prime Minister.”

“And old Gordon’s son is cleverer than my boy—than the namesake of Kenelm Digby!” and Sir Peter sighed.

“I did not say that. I am cleverer than Chillingly Gordon, and the proof of it is that I am too clever to wish to be Prime Minister—very disagreeable office—hard work—irregular hours for meals—much abuse and confirmed dyspepsia.”

Sir Peter went away rather downhearted. He found Chillingly Gordon at home in a lodging in Jermyn Street. Though prepossessed against him by all he had heard, Sir Peter was soon propitiated in his favour. Gordon had a frank man-of-the-world way with him, and much too fine a tact to utter any sentiments likely to displease an old-fashioned country gentleman, and a relation who might possibly be of service in his career. He touched briefly, and with apparent feeling, on the unhappy litigation commenced by his father; spoke with affectionate praise of Kenelm; and with a discriminating good-nature of Mivers,

as a man who, to parody the epigram on Charles II.

“Never says a kindly thing
And never does a harsh one.”

Then he drew Sir Peter on to talk of the country and agricultural prospects. Learned that among his objects in visiting town, was the wish to inspect a patented hydraulic ram that might be very useful for his farmyard, which was ill supplied with water. Startled the Baronet by evincing some practical knowledge of mechanics ; insisted on accompanying him to the city to inspect the ram ; did so, and approved the purchase ; took him next to see a new American reaping-machine, and did not part with him till he had obtained Sir Peter's promise to dine with him at the Garrick ; an invitation peculiarly agreeable to Sir Peter, who had a natural curiosity to see some of the more recently distinguished frequenters of that social club. As, on quitting Gordon, Sir Peter took his way to the house of Leopold Travers, his thoughts turned with much kindness to-

wards his young kinsman. "Mivers and Kenelm," quoth he to himself, "gave me an unfavourable impression of this lad; they represent him as worldly, self-seeking, and so forth. But Mivers takes such cynical views of character, and Kenelm is too eccentric to judge fairly of a sensible man of the world. At all events it is not like an egotist to put himself out of his way to be so civil to an old fellow like me. A young man about town must have pleasanter modes of passing his day than inspecting hydraulic rams and reaping-machines. Clever they allow him to be. Yes, decidedly clever—and not offensively clever—practical."

Sir Peter found Travers in the dining-room with his daughter, Mrs Campion, and Lady Glenalvon. Travers was one of those men rare in middle age, who are more often to be found in their drawing-room than in their private study; he was fond of female society; and perhaps it was this predilection which contributed to preserve in him the charm of good breeding and winning man-

ners. The two men had not met for many years ; not indeed since Travers was at the zenith of his career of fashion, and Sir Peter was one of those pleasant *dilettanti* and half humouristic conversationalists who become popular and courted diners-out.

Sir Peter had originally been a moderate Whig because his father had been one before him, but he left the Whig party with the Duke of Richmond, Mr Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), and others, when it seemed to him that that party had ceased to be moderate.

Leopold Travers had, as a youth in the Guards, been a high Tory, but, siding with Sir Robert Peel on the repeal of the Corn Laws, remained with the Peelites after the bulk of the Tory party had renounced the guidance of their former chief, and now went with these Peelites in whatever direction the progress of the age might impel their strides in advance of Whigs and in defiance of Tories.

However, it is not the politics of these

two gentlemen that are in question now. As I have just said, they had not met for many years. Travers was very little changed. Sir Peter recognised him at a glance; Sir Peter was much changed, and Travers hesitated before, on hearing his name announced, he felt quite sure that it was the right Sir Peter towards whom he advanced, and to whom he extended his cordial hand. Travers preserved the colour of his hair and the neat proportions of his figure, and was as scrupulously well dressed as in his dandy days. Sir Peter, originally very thin and with fair locks and dreamy blue eyes, had now become rather portly, at least towards the middle of him—very grey—had long ago taken to spectacles—his dress too was very old fashioned, and made by a country tailor. He looked quite as much a gentleman as Travers did; quite perhaps as healthy, allowing for difference of years; quite as likely to last his time. But between them was the difference of the nervous temperament and the lymphatic. Travers, with

less brain than Sir Peter, had kept his brain constantly active ; Sir Peter had allowed his brain to dawdle over old books and lazy delight in letting the hours slip by. Therefore Travers still looked young—alert—up to his day, up to anything ; while Sir Peter, entering that drawing-room, seemed a sort of Rip van Winkle who had slept through the past generation, and looked on the present with eyes yet drowsy. Still, in those rare moments when he was thoroughly roused up, there would have been found in Sir Peter a glow of heart, nay, even a vigour of thought, much more expressive than the constitutional alertness that characterized Leopold Travers, of the attributes we most love and admire in the young.

“ My dear Sir Peter, is it you ? I am so glad to see you again,” said Travers. “ What an age since we met, and how condescendingly kind you were then to me ; silly fop that I was ! But bygones are bygones ; come to the present. Let me introduce to you, first, my valued friend, Mrs Campion,

whose distinguished husband you remember. Ah, what pleasant meetings we had at his house ! And next, that young lady of whom she takes motherly charge ; my daughter Cecilia. Lady Glenalvon, your wife's friend, of course needs no introduction, time stands still with her."

Sir Peter lowered his spectacles, which in reality he only wanted for books in small print, and gazed attentively on the three ladies—at each gaze a bow. But while his eyes were still lingeringly fixed on Cecilia, Lady Glenalvon advanced, naturally in right of rank and the claim of old acquaintance, the first of the three to greet him.

"Alas, my dear Sir Peter ! time does not stand still for any of us ; but what matter, if it leaves pleasant footprints ! When I see you again, my youth comes before me. My early friend, Caroline Brotherton, now Lady Chillingly ; our girlish walks with each other ; wreaths and ball-dresses the practical topic ; prospective husbands, the

dream at a distance. Come and sit here: tell me all about Caroline."

Sir Peter, who had little to say about Caroline that could possibly interest anybody but himself, nevertheless took his seat beside Lady Glenalvon, and, as in duty bound, made the most flattering account of his She Baronet which experience or invention would allow. All the while, however, his thoughts were on Kenelm, and his eyes on Cecilia.

Cecilia resumes some mysterious piece of lady's work—no matter what—perhaps embroidery for a music-stool, perhaps a pair of slippers for her father (which, being rather vain of his feet and knowing they looked best in plain morocco, he will certainly never wear). Cecilia appears absorbed in her occupation; but her eyes and her thoughts are on Sir Peter. Why, my lady reader may guess. And oh, so flatteringly, so lovingly fixed! She thinks he has a most charming, intelligent, benignant countenance. She admires even his old-fashioned

frock-coat, high neckcloth, and strapped trousers. She venerates his grey hairs, pure of dye. She tries to find a close resemblance between that fair, blue-eyed, plumpish, elderly gentleman and the lean, dark-eyed, saturnine, lofty Kenelm; she detects the likeness which nobody else would. She begins to love Sir Peter, though he has not said a word to her.

Ah! on this, a word for what it is worth to you, my young readers. You, sir, wishing to marry a girl who is to be deeply, lastingly in love with you, and a thoroughly good wife practically, consider well how she takes to your parents—how she attaches to them an inexpressible sentiment, a disinterested reverence—even should you but dimly recognize the sentiment, or feel the reverence, how if between you and your parents some little cause of coldness arise, she will charm you back to honour your father and your mother, even though they are not particularly genial to her—well, if you win that sort of girl as your wife, think

you have got a treasure. You have won a woman to whom Heaven has given the two best attributes — intense feeling of love, intense sense of duty. What, my dear lady reader, I say of one sex, I say of another, though in a less degree; because a girl who marries becomes of her husband's family, and the man does not become of his wife's. Still I distrust the depth of any man's love to a woman, if he does not feel a great degree of tenderness (and forbearance where differences arise) for her parents. But the wife must not so put them in the foreground as to make the husband think he is cast into the cold of the shadow. Pardon this intolerable length of digression, dear reader—it is not altogether a digression, for it belongs to my tale that you should clearly understand the sort of girl that is personified in Cecilia Travers.

“What has become of Kenelm?” asks Lady Glenalvon.

“I wish I could tell you,” answers Sir Peter.
“He wrote me word that he was going forth

on rambles into 'fresh woods and pastures new,' perhaps for some weeks. I have not had a word from him since."

"You make me uneasy," said Lady Glenalvon. "I hope nothing can have happened to him—he cannot have fallen ill."

Cecilia stops her work, and looks up wistfully.

"Make your mind easy," said Travers with a laugh; "I am in his secret. He has challenged the champion of England, and gone into the country to train."

"Very likely," said Sir Peter quietly; "I should not be in the least surprised, should you, Miss Travers?"

"I think it more probable that Mr Chillingly is doing some kindness to others which he wishes to keep concealed."

Sir Peter was pleased with this reply, and drew his chair nearer to Cecilia's. Lady Glenalvon, charmed to bring those two together, soon rose and took leave.

Sir Peter remained nearly an hour talking chiefly with Cecilia, who won her way into

his heart with extraordinary ease ; and he did not quit the house till he had engaged her father, Mrs Campion, and herself to pay him a week's visit at Exmundham, towards the end of the London season, which was fast approaching.

Having obtained this promise, Sir Peter went away, and ten minutes after Mr. Gordon Chillingly entered the drawing-room. He had already established a visiting acquaintance with the Traverses. Travers had taken a liking to him. Mrs Campion found him an extremely well-informed, unaffected young man, very superior to young men in general. Cecilia was cordially polite to Kenelm's cousin.

Altogether that was a very happy day for Sir Peter. He enjoyed greatly his dinner at the Garrick, where he met some old acquaintances, and was presented to some new "celebrities." He observed that Gordon stood well with these eminent persons. Though as yet undistinguished himself, they treated him with a certain respect, as well as

with evident liking. The most eminent of them, at least the one with the most solidly-established reputation, said in Sir Peter's ear, "You may be proud of your nephew, Gordon!"

"He is not my nephew, only the son of a very distant cousin."

"Sorry for that. But he will shed lustre on kinsfolk, however distant. Clever fellow, yet popular; rare combination — sure to rise."

Sir Peter suppressed a gulp in the throat. "Ah, if some one as eminent had spoken thus of Kenelm!"

But he was too generous to allow that half-envious sentiment to last more than a moment. Why should he not be proud of any member of the family who could irradiate the antique obscurity of the Chillingly race? And how agreeable this clever young man made himself to Sir Peter!

The next day Gordon insisted on accompanying him to see the latest acquisitions in the British Museum, and various

other exhibitions, and went at night to the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where Sir Peter was infinitely delighted with an admirable little comedy by Mr Robertson, admirably placed on the stage by Marie Wilton. The day after, when Gordon called on him at his hotel, he cleared his throat, and thus plunged at once into the communication he had hitherto delayed.

"Gordon, my boy, I owe you a debt, and I am now, thanks to Kenelm, able to pay it."

Gordon gave a little start of surprise, but remained silent.

"I told your father, shortly after Kenelm was born, that I meant to give up my London house, and lay by £1000 a year for you, in compensation for your chance of succeeding to Exmundham should I have died childless. Well, your father did not seem to think much of that promise, and went to law with me about certain unquestionable rights of mine. How so clever a man could have made such a mistake, would puzzle me,

if I did not remember that he had a quarrelsome temper. Temper is a thing that often dominates cleverness — an uncontrollable thing ; and allowances must be made for it. Not being of a quarrelsome temper myself (the Chillinglys are a placid race), I did not make the allowance for your father's differing, and (for a Chillingly) abnormal, constitution. The language and the tone of his letter respecting it, nettled me. I did not see why, thus treated, I should pinch myself to lay by a thousand a year. Facilities for buying a property most desirable for the possessor of Exmundham presented themselves. I bought it with borrowed money, and though I gave up the house in London, I did not lay by the thousand a year."

"My dear Sir Peter, I have always regretted that my poor father was misled—perhaps out of too paternal a care for my supposed interests—into that unhappy and fruitless litigation, after which no one could doubt that any generous intentions on your part would be finally abandoned. It has been

a grateful surprise to me that I have been so kindly and cordially received into the family by Kenelm and yourself. Pray oblige me by dropping all reference to pecuniary matters—the idea of compensation to a very distant relative for the loss of expectations he had no right to form, is too absurd, for me at least, ever to entertain.”

“But I am absurd enough to entertain it—though you express yourself in a very high-minded way. To come to the point, Kenelm is of age, and we have cut off the entail. The estate of course remains absolutely with Kenelm to dispose of, as it did before, and we must take it for granted that he will marry; at all events he cannot fall into your poor father’s error; but whatever Kenelm hereafter does with his property, it is nothing to you, and is not to be counted upon. Even the title dies with Kenelm if he has no son. On resettling the estate, however, sums of money have been released which, as I stated before, enable me to discharge the debt which, Kenelm heartily

agrees with me, is due to you. £20,000 are now lying at my bankers' to be transferred to yours; meanwhile, if you will call on my solicitor, Mr Vining, Lincoln's-inn, you can see the new deed, and give to him your receipt for the £20,000 for which he holds my cheque. Stop—stop—stop—I will not hear a word—no thanks, they are not due.”

Here Gordon, who had during this speech uttered various brief exclamations, which Sir Peter did not heed, caught hold of his kinsman's hand, and, despite of all struggles, pressed his lips on it. “I must thank you, I must give some vent to my emotions,” cried Gordon. “This sum, great in itself, is far more to me than you can imagine—it opens my career—it assures my future.”

“So Kenelm tells me; he said that sum would be more use to you now than ten times the amount twenty years hence.”

“So it will—it will. And Kenelm consents to this sacrifice?”

“Consents—urges it!”

Gordon turned away his face, and Sir Peter resumed: "You want to get into Parliament; very natural ambition for a clever young fellow. I don't presume to dictate politics to you. I hear you are what is called a liberal; a man may be a liberal, I suppose, without being a Jacobin."

"I hope so, indeed. For my part I am anything but a violent man."

"Violent, no! Who ever heard of a violent Chillingly? But I was reading in the newspaper to-day a speech addressed to some populous audience, in which the orator was for dividing all the land and all the capital belonging to other people among the working class, calmly and quietly, without any violence, and deprecating violence; but saying, perhaps very truly, that the people to be robbed might not like it, and might offer violence; in which case woe betide them—it was they who would be guilty of violence—and they must take the consequences if they resisted the reasonable propositions of himself and his friends! That,

I suppose, is among the new ideas with which Kenelm is more familiar than I am. Do you entertain those new ideas?"

"Certainly not—I despise the fools who do."

"And you will not abet revolutionary measures if you get into Parliament?"

"My dear Sir Peter—I fear you have heard very false reports of my opinions if you put such questions. Listen," and there-with Gordon launched into dissertations very clever, very subtle, which committed him to nothing, beyond the wisdom of guiding popular opinion into right directions; what might be right directions he did not define, he left Sir Peter to guess them. Sir Peter did guess them, as Gordon meant he should, to be the directions which he, Sir Peter, thought right; and he was satisfied.

That subject disposed of, Gordon said, with much apparent feeling, "May I ask you to complete the favours you have lavished on me. I have never seen Exmundham, and the home of the race from which

I sprang has a deep interest for me. Will you allow me to spend a few days with you, and under the shade of your own trees take lessons in political science from one who has evidently reflected on it profoundly?"

"Profoundly—no—a little—a little, as a mere bystander," said Sir Peter modestly, but much flattered. "Come, my dear boy, by all means; you will have a hearty welcome. By-the-by, Travers and his handsome daughter promise to visit me in about a fortnight, why not come at the same time?"

A sudden flash lit up the young man's countenance. "I shall be so delighted," he cried. "I am but slightly acquainted with Mr Travers, but I like him much, and Mrs Campion is so well informed."

"And what say you to the girl?"

"The girl, Miss Travers. Oh, she is very well in her way. But I don't talk with young ladies more than I can help."

"Then you are like your cousin Kenelm?"

"I wish I were like him in other things."

"No, one such oddity in a family is quite

enough. But though I would not have you change to a Kenelm, I would not change Kenelm for the most perfect model of a son that the world can exhibit." Delivering himself of this burst of parental fondness, Sir Peter shook hands with Gordon, and walked off to Mivers, who was to give him luncheon, and then accompany him to the station. Sir Peter was to return to Ex-mundham by the afternoon express.

Left alone, Gordon indulged in one of those luxurious guesses into the future which form the happiest moments in youth, when so ambitious as his. The sum Sir Peter placed at his disposal would ensure his entrance into Parliament. He counted with confidence on early successes there. He extended the scope of his views. With such successes he might calculate with certainty on a brilliant marriage, augmenting his fortune, and confirming his position. He had previously fixed his thoughts on Cecilia Travers—I will do him the justice to say not from mercenary motives alone, but not

certainly with the impetuous ardour of youthful love. He thought her exactly fitted to be the wife of an eminent public man, in person, acquirement, dignified yet popular manners. He esteemed her, he liked her, and then her fortune would add solidity to his position. In fact, he had that sort of rational attachment to Cecilia which wise men, like Lord Bacon and Montaigne, would commend to another wise man seeking a wife. What opportunities of awaking in herself a similar, perhaps a warmer, attachment the visit to Exmundham would afford! He had learned when he had called on the Traverses that they were going thither, and hence that burst of family sentiment which had procured the invitation to himself.

But he must be cautious, he must not prematurely awaken Travers' suspicions. He was not as yet a match that the squire could approve of for his heiress. And, though he was ignorant of Sir Peter's designs on that young lady, he was much too prudent to confide his own to a kinsman, of whose dis-

cretion he had strong misgivings. It was enough for him at present that way was opened for his own resolute energies. And cheerfully, though musingly, he weighed its obstacles, and divined its goal, as he paced his floor with bended head and restless strides, now quick, now slow.

Sir Peter, in the meanwhile, found a very good luncheon prepared for him at Mivers's rooms, which he had all to himself, for his host never "spoilt his dinner and insulted his breakfast" by that intermediate meal. He remained at his desk writing brief notes of business, or of pleasure, while Sir Peter did justice to lamb cutlets and grilled chicken. But he looked up from his task, with raised eyebrows, when Sir Peter, after a somewhat discursive account of his visit to the Travverses, his admiration of Cecilia, and the adroitness with which, acting on his cousin's hint, he had engaged the family to spend a few days at Exmundham, added, "And by-the-by, I have asked young Gordon to meet them."

“To meet them; meet Mr and Miss Travers! you have? I thought you wished Kenelm to marry Cecilia. I was mistaken, you meant Gordon!”

“Gordon,” exclaimed Sir Peter, dropping his knife and fork. “Nonsense, you don’t suppose that Miss Travers prefers him to Kenelm, or that he has the presumption to fancy that her father would sanction his addresses.”

“I indulge in no suppositions of the sort. I content myself with thinking that Gordon is clever, insinuating, young; and it is a very good chance of bettering himself that you have thrown in his way. However, it is no affair of mine; and though on the whole I like Kenelm better than Gordon, still I like Gordon very well, and I have an interest in following his career which I can’t say I have in conjecturing what may be Kenelm’s—more likely no career at all.”

“Mivers, you delight in provoking me; you do say such uncomfortable things. But, in the first place, Gordon spoke rather slightly of Miss Travers.”

"Ah, indeed; that's a bad sign," muttered Mivers.

Sir Peter did not hear him, and went on.

"And, besides, I feel pretty sure that the dear girl has already a regard for Kenelm which allows no room for a rival. However I shall not forget your hint, but keep a sharp look-out; and if I see the young man wants to be too sweet on Cecilia, I shall cut short his visit."

"Give yourself no trouble in the matter; it will do no good. Marriages are made in heaven. Heaven's will be done. If I can get away I will run down to you for a day or two. Perhaps in that case you can ask Lady Glenalvon. I like her, and she likes Kenelm. Have you finished? I see the brougham is at the door, and we have to call at your hotel to take up your carpet bag."

Mivers was deliberately sealing his notes while he thus spoke. He now rang for his servant, gave orders for their delivery, and then followed Sir Peter downstairs and into the brougham. Not a word would he say

more about Gordon, and Sir Peter shrank from telling him about the £20,000. Chillingly Mivers was perhaps the last person to whom Sir Peter would be tempted to parade an act of generosity. Mivers might not unfrequently do a generous act himself, provided it was not divulged ; but he had always a sneer for the generosity of others.

CHAPTER II.

WANDERING back towards Moleswick, Kenelm found himself a little before sunset on the banks of the garrulous brook, almost opposite to the house inhabited by Lily Mordaunt. He stood long and silently by the grassy margin, his dark shadow falling over the stream, broken into fragments by the eddy and strife of waves, fresh from their leap down the neighbouring waterfall. His eyes rested on the house and the garden lawn in the front. The upper windows were open. "I wonder which is hers," he said to himself. At last he caught a glimpse of the gardener, bending over a flower border with his watering-pot, and then moving slowly through the little shrubbery, no doubt to his

own cottage. Now the lawn was solitary, save that a couple of thrushes dropped suddenly on the sward.

"Good evening, sir," said a voice. "A capital spot for trout this."

Kenelm turned his head, and beheld on the footpath, just behind him, a respectable elderly man, apparently of the class of a small retail tradesman, with a fishing-rod in his hand and a basket belted to his side.

"For trout," replied Kenelm; "I dare say. A strangely attractive spot indeed."

"Are you an angler, sir, if I may make bold to inquire?" asked the elderly man, somewhat perhaps puzzled as to the rank of the stranger; noticing, on the one hand, his dress and his mien, on the other, slung to his shoulders, the worn and shabby knapsack which Kenelm had carried, at home and abroad, the preceding year.

"Aye, I am an angler."

"Then this is the best place in the whole stream. Look, sir, there is Izaak Walton's summer-house; and further down you see

that white, neat-looking house. Well, that is my house, sir, and I have an apartment which I let to gentlemen anglers. It is generally occupied throughout the summer months. I expect every day to have a letter to engage it, but it is vacant now. A very nice apartment, sir—sitting-room and bedroom.”

“*Descende cælo, et dic age tibia,*” said Kenelm.

“Sir!” said the elderly man.

“I beg you ten thousand pardons. I have had the misfortune to have been at the university, and to have learned a little Latin, which sometimes comes back very inopportunately. But, speaking in plain English, what I meant to say is this: I invoked the Muse to descend from heaven and bring with her—the original says a fife, but I meant—a fishing-rod. I should think your apartment would suit me exactly; pray show it to me.”

“With the greatest pleasure,” said the elderly man. “The Muse need not bring a fishing-rod! we have all sorts of tackle at

your service, and a boat too, if you care for that. The stream hereabouts is so shallow and narrow that a boat is of little use till you get farther down."

"I don't want to get farther down; but should I want to get to the opposite bank, without wading across, would the boat take me, or is there a bridge?"

"The boat can take you. It is a flat-bottomed punt, and there is a bridge too for foot passengers, just opposite my house; and between this and Moleswick, where the stream widens, there is a ferry. The stone bridge for traffic is at the farther end of the town."

"Good. Let us go at once to your house."

The two men walked on.

"By-the-by," said Kenelm as they walked, "do you know much of the family who inhabit the pretty cottage on the opposite side, which we have just left behind?"

"Mrs Cameron's. Yes, of course, a very good lady; and Mr Melville, the painter. I am sure I ought to know, for he has often lodged with me when he came to visit Mrs

Cameron. He recommends my apartment to his friends, and they are my best lodgers. I like painters, sir, though I don't know much about paintings. They are pleasant gentlemen, and easily contented with my humble roof and fare."

"You are quite right. I don't know much about paintings myself, but I am inclined to believe that painters, judging not from what I have seen of them, for I have not a single acquaintance among them personally, but from what I have read of their lives, are, as a general rule, not only pleasant but noble gentlemen. They form within themselves desires to beautify or exalt commonplace things, and they can only accomplish their desires by a constant study of what is beautiful and what is exalted. A man constantly so engaged ought to be a very noble gentleman, even though he may be the son of a shoeblack. And living in a higher world than we do, I can conceive that he is, as you say, very well contented with humble roof and fare in the world we inhabit."

“Exactly, sir; I see—I see now, though you put it in a way that never struck me before.”

“And yet,” said Kenelm, looking benignly at the speaker, “you seem to me a well-educated and intelligent man; reflective on things in general, without being unmindful of your interests in particular, especially when you have lodgings to let. Do not be offended. That sort of man is not perhaps born to be a painter, but I respect him highly. The world, sir, requires the vast majority of its inhabitants to live in it—to live by it. ‘Each for himself and God for us all.’ The greatest happiness of the greatest number is best secured by a prudent consideration for Number One.”

Somewhat to Kenelm’s surprise (allowing that he had now learned enough of life to be occasionally surprised) the elderly man here made a dead halt, stretched out his hand cordially, and cried, “Hear, hear! I see that, like me, you are a decided democrat.”

“Democrat! Pray, may I ask, not why

you are one—that would be a liberty, and democrats resent any liberty taken with themselves—but why you suppose I am?”

“You spoke of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. That is a democratic sentiment surely! Besides, did not you say, sir, that painters—painters, sir, painters, even if they were the sons of shoeblacks, were the true gentlemen—the true noblemen?”

“I did not say that exactly, to the disparagement of other gentlemen and nobles. But if I did, what then?”

“Sir, I agree with you. I despise rank, I despise dukes, and earls, and aristocrats. ‘An honest man’s the noblest work of God.’ Some poet says that. I think Shakespeare. Wonderful man, Shakespeare. A tradesman’s son—butcher, I believe. Eh! My uncle was a butcher, and might have been an alderman. I go along with you heartily, heartily. I am a democrat, every inch of me. Shake hands, sir—shake hands; we are all equals. ‘Each for himself, and God for us all.’”

“I have no objection to shake hands,” said Kenelm; “but don’t let me owe your condescension to false pretences. Though we are all equal before the law, except the rich man, who has little chance of justice as against a poor man when submitted to an English jury, yet I utterly deny that any two men you select can be equals. One must beat the other in something, and when one man beats another, democracy ceases and aristocracy begins.”

“Aristocracy! I don’t see that. What do you mean by aristocracy?”

“The ascendancy of the better man. In a rude State the better man is the stronger; in a corrupt State, perhaps the more roguish; in modern republics the jobbers get the money and the lawyers get the power. In well-ordered States alone aristocracy appears at its genuine worth: the better man in birth, because respect for ancestry secures a higher standard of honour; the better man in wealth, because of the immense uses to enterprise, energy, and the fine arts, which rich men must

be if they follow their natural inclinations ; the better man in character, the better man in ability, for reasons too obvious to define ; and these two last will beat the others in the government of the State, if the State be flourishing and free. All these four classes of better men constitute true aristocracy ; and when a better government than a true aristocracy shall be devised by the wit of man, we shall not be far off from the Millennium and the reign of saints. But here we are at the house—yours, is it not ? I like the look of it extremely.”

The elderly man now entered the little porch, over which clambered honeysuckle and ivy intertwined, and ushered Kenelm into a pleasant parlour, with a bay window, and an equally pleasant bedroom behind it.

“ Will it do, sir ? ”

“ Perfectly. I take it from this moment. My knapsack contains all I shall need for the night. There is a portmanteau of mine at Mr Summers’s shop, which can be sent here in the morning.”

"But we have not settled about the terms," said the elderly man, beginning to feel rather doubtful whether he ought thus to have installed in his home a stalwart pedestrian of whom he knew nothing, and who, though talking glibly enough on other things, had preserved an ominous silence on the subject of payment.

"Terms—true, name them."

"Including board?"

"Certainly. Chameleons live on air, Democrats on wind-bags. I have a more vulgar appetite, and require mutton!"

"Meat is very dear now-a-days," said the elderly man, "and I am afraid, for board and lodging, I cannot charge you less than £3 3s.—say £3 a week. My lodgers usually pay a week in advance."

"Agreed," said Kenelm, extracting three sovereigns from his purse. "I have dined already—I want nothing more this evening; let me detain you no further. Be kind enough to shut the door after you."

When he was alone, Kenelm seated him-

self in the recess of the bay window, against the casement, and looked forth intently. Yes—he was right—he could see from thence the home of Lily. Not, indeed, more than a white gleam of the house through the interstices of trees and shrubs—but the gentle lawn sloping to the brook, with the great willow at the end dipping its boughs into the water, and shutting out all view beyond itself by its bower of tender leaves. The young man bent his face on his hands and mused dreamily : the evening deepened, the stars came forth, the rays of the moon now peered aslant through the arching dips of the willow, silvering their way as they stole to the waves below.

“Shall I bring lights, sir ? or do you prefer a lamp or candles ?” asked a voice behind ; the voice of the elderly man’s wife. “Do you like the shutters closed ?”

The questions startled the dreamer. They seemed mocking his own old mockings on the romance of love. Lamp or candles,

practical lights for prosaic eyes, and shutters closed against moon and stars !

“Thank you, ma'am, not yet,” he said ; and rising quietly he placed his hand on the window-sill, swung himself through the open casement, and passed slowly along the margin of the rivulet by a path chequered alternately with shade and starlight ; the moon yet more slowly rising above the willows, and lengthening its track along the wavelets.

CHAPTER III.

THOUGH Kenelm did not think it necessary at present to report to his parents, or his London acquaintances, his recent movements and his present resting-place, it never entered into his head to lurk *perdu* in the immediate vicinity of Lily's house, and seek opportunities of meeting her clandestinely. He walked to Mrs Braefield's the next morning, found her at home, and said in rather a more off-hand manner than was habitual to him, "I have hired a lodging in your neighbourhood, on the banks of the brook, for the sake of its trout-fishing. So you will allow me to call on you sometimes, and one of these days I hope you will give me the dinner that I so unceremoniously rejected

some days ago. I was then summoned away suddenly, much against my will."

"Yes; my husband said that you shot off from him with a wild exclamation about duty."

"Quite true; my reason, and I may say my conscience, were greatly perplexed upon a matter extremely important and altogether new to me. I went to Oxford—the place above all others in which questions of reason and conscience are most deeply considered, and perhaps least satisfactorily solved. Relieved in my mind by my visit to a distinguished ornament of that university, I felt I might indulge in a summer holiday, and here I am."

"Ah! I understand. You had religious doubts—thought perhaps of turning Roman Catholic. I hope you are not going to do so?"

"My doubts were not necessarily of a religious nature. Pagans have entertained them."

"Whatever they were I am pleased to see

they did not prevent your return," said Mrs Braefield graciously. "But where have you found a lodging—why not have come to us? My husband would have been scarcely less glad than myself to receive you."

"You say that so sincerely, and so cordially, that to answer by a brief 'I thank you' seems rigid and heartless. But there are times in life when one yearns to be alone—to commune with one's own heart, and, if possible, be still; I am in one of those moody times. Bear with me."

Mrs Braefield looked at him with affectionate, kindly interest. She had gone before him through the solitary load of young romance. She remembered her dreamy, dangerous girlhood, when she, too, had yearned to be alone.

"Bear with you—yes, indeed. I wish, Mr Chillingly, that I were your sister, and that you would confide in me. Something troubles you."

"Troubles me — no. My thoughts are happy ones, and they may sometimes perplex

me, but they do not trouble." Kenelm said this very softly ; and in the warmer light of his musing eyes, the sweeter play of his tranquil smile, there was an expression which did not belie his words.

"You have not told me where you have found a lodging," said Mrs Braefield, somewhat abruptly.

"Did I not !" replied Kenelm, with an unconscious start, as from an abstracted reverie. "With no undistinguished host, I presume, for when I asked him this morning for the right address of his cottage, in order to direct such luggage as I have to be sent there, he gave me his card with a grand air, saying, 'I am pretty well known at Moleswick, by and beyond it.' I have not yet looked at his card. Oh, here it is—'Algernon Sidney Gale Jones, Cromwell Lodge'—you laugh. What do you know of him?"

"I wish my husband were here ; he would tell you more about him. Mr Jones is quite a character."

“So I perceive.”

“A great radical—very talkative and troublesome at the vestry; but our vicar, Mr Emlyn, says there is no real harm in him—that his bark is worse than his bite—and that his republican or radical notions must be laid to the door of his godfathers! In addition to his name of Jones, he was unhappily christened Gale; Gale Jones being a noted radical orator at the time of his birth. And I suppose Algernon Sidney was prefixed to Gale in order to devote the new-born more emphatically to republican principles.”

“Naturally, therefore, Algernon Sidney Gale Jones baptizes his house Cromwell Lodge, seeing that Algernon Sidney held the Protectorate in especial abhorrence, and that the original Gale Jones, if an honest radical, must have done the same, considering what rough usage the advocates of parliamentary reform met with at the hands of his Highness. But we must be indulgent to men who have been unfortunately chris-

tened before they had any choice of the names that were to rule their fate. I myself should have been less whimsical had I not been named after a Kenelm who believed in sympathetic powders. Apart from his political doctrines, I like my landlord—he keeps his wife in excellent order. She seems frightened at the sound of her own footsteps, and glides to and fro, a pallid image of submissive womanhood in list slippers.”

“Great recommendations certainly, and Cromwell Lodge is very prettily situated. By-the-by, it is very near Mrs Cameron’s.”

“Now I think of it, so it is,” said Kenelm innocently.

Ah! my friend Kenelm, enemy of shams, and truth-teller *par excellence*, what hast thou come to! How are the mighty fallen! “Since you say you will dine with us, suppose we fix the day after to-morrow, and I will ask Mrs Cameron and Lily.”

“The day after to-morrow—I shall be delighted.”

“An early hour?”

"The earlier the better."

"Is six o'clock too early?"

"Too early—certainly not—on the contrary—— Good-day—I must now go to Mrs Somers, she has charge of my port-manteau."

Then Kenelm rose.

"Poor dear Lily!" said Mrs Braefield;
"I wish she were less of a child."

Kenelm re-seated himself.

"Is she a child? I don't think she is actually a child."

"Not in years; she is between seventeen and eighteen; but my husband says that she is too childish to talk to, and always tells me to take her off his hands; he would rather talk with Mrs Cameron."

"Indeed!"

"Still I find something in her."

"Indeed!"

"Not exactly childish, nor quite womanish."

"What then?"

"I can't exactly define. But you know

what Mr Melville and Mrs Cameron call her, as a pet name?"

"No."

"Fairy! Fairies have no age; fairy is neither child nor woman."

"Fairy. She is called Fairy by those who know her best? Fairy!"

"And she believes in fairies."

"Does she?—so do I. Pardon me, I must be off. The day after to-morrow—six o'clock."

"Wait one moment," said Elsie, going to her writing-table. "Since you pass Grasmere on your way home, will you kindly leave this note?"

"I thought Grasmere was a lake in the north?"

"Yes; but Mr Melville chose to call the cottage by the name of the lake. I think the first picture he ever sold was a view of Wordsworth's house there. Here is my note to ask Mrs Cameron to meet you; but if you object to be my messenger——"

"Object! my dear Mrs Braefield. As you say, I pass close by the cottage."

CHAPTER IV.

KENELM went with somewhat rapid pace from Mrs Braefield's to the shop in the High Street, kept by Will Somers. Jessie was behind the counter, which was thronged with customers. Kenelm gave her a brief direction about his portmanteau, and then passed into the back parlour where her husband was employed on his baskets—with the baby's cradle in the corner, and its grandmother rocking it mechanically, as she read a wonderful missionary tract full of tales of miraculous conversions: into what sort of Christians we will not pause to inquire.

“And so you are happy, Will?” said Kenelm, seating himself between the basket-maker and the infant; the dear old mother

beside him, reading the tract which linked her dreams of life eternal with life just opening in the cradle that she rocked. He not happy! How he pitied the man who could ask such a question.

“Happy, sir! I should think so, indeed. There is not a night on which Jessie and I, and mother too, do not pray that some day or other you may be as happy. By-and-by the baby will learn to pray ‘God bless papa, and mamma, grandmamma, and Mr Chillingly.’”

“There is some one else much more deserving of prayers than I, though needing them less. You will know some day—pass it by now. To return to the point; you are happy; if I asked why, would not you say, ‘Because I have married the girl I love, and have never repented’?”

“Well, sir, that is about it; though begging your pardon, I think it could be put more prettily somehow.”

“You are right there. But perhaps love and happiness never yet found any words

that could fitly express them. Good-bye, for the present."

Ah! if it were as mere materialists, or as many middle-aged or elderly folks, who if materialists are so without knowing it, unreflectingly say, "The main element of happiness is bodily or animal health and strength," that question which Chillingly put would appear a very unmeaning or a very insulting one addressed to a pale cripple, who, however improved of late in health, would still be sickly and ailing all his life,—put, too, by a man of the rarest conformation of physical powers that nature can adapt to physical enjoyment—a man who, since the age in which memory commences, had never known what it was to be unwell, who could scarcely understand you if you talked of a finger-ache, and whom those refinements of mental culture which multiply the delights of the senses had endowed with the most exquisite conceptions of such happiness as mere nature and its instincts can give! But Will did not think the question un-

meaning or insulting. He, the poor cripple, felt a vast superiority on the scale of joyous being over the young Hercules, well-born, cultured, and wealthy, who could know so little of happiness as to ask the crippled basket-maker if he were happy—he, blessed husband and father !

CHAPTER V.

LILY was seated on the grass under a chestnut-tree on the lawn. A white cat, not long emerged from kittenhood, curled itself by her side. On her lap was an open volume, which she was reading with the greatest delight.

Mrs Cameron came from the house, looked round, perceived the girl, and approached; and either she moved so gently, or Lily was so absorbed in her book, that the latter was not aware of her presence till she felt a light hand on her shoulder, and, looking up, recognised her aunt's gentle face.

"Ah! Fairy, Fairy, that silly book when you ought to be at your French verbs. What will your guardian say when he comes and finds you have so wasted time?"

“He will say that fairies never waste their time; and he will scold you for saying so.” Therewith Lily threw down the book, sprang up to her feet, wound her arm round Mrs Cameron’s neck, and kissed her fondly. “There! is *that* wasting time? I love you so, aunty. In a day like this I think I love everybody and everything!” As she said this, she drew up her lithe form, looked into the blue sky, and with parted lips seemed to drink in air and sunshine. Then she woke up the dozing cat, and began chasing it round the lawn.

Mrs Cameron stood still, regarding her with moistened eyes. Just at that moment Kenelm entered through the garden gate. He, too, stood still, his eyes fixed on the undulating movements of Fairy’s exquisite form. She had arrested her favourite, and was now at play with it, shaking off her straw hat, and drawing the ribbon attached to it tantalizingly along the smooth grass. Her rich hair thus released and dishevelled by the exercise, fell partly over her face in wavy

ringlets ; and her musical laugh and words of sportive endearment, sounded on Kenelm's ear more joyously than the trill of the skylark, more sweetly than the coo of the ring-dove.

He approached towards Mrs Cameron. Lily turned suddenly and saw him. Instinctively she smoothed back her loosened tresses, replaced the straw hat, and came up demurely to his side just as he had accosted her aunt.

"Pardon my intrusion, Mrs Cameron. I am the bearer of this note from Mrs Braefield." While the aunt read the note, he turned to the niece.

"You promised to show me the picture, Miss Mordaunt."

"But that was a long time ago."

"Too long to expect a lady's promise to be kept?"

Lily seemed to ponder that question, and hesitated before she answered.

"I will show you the picture. I don't think I ever broke a promise yet, but I

shall be more careful how I make one in future."

"Why so?"

"Because you did not value mine when I made it, and that hurt me." Lily lifted up her head with a bewitching stateliness, and added gravely, "I was offended."

"Mrs Braefield is very kind," said Mrs Cameron; "she asks us to dine the day after to-morrow. You would like to go, Lily?"

"All grown-up people, I suppose? No, thank you, dear aunt. You go alone, I would rather stay at home. May I have little Clemmy to play with? She will bring Juba, and Blanche is very partial to Juba, though she does scratch him."

"Very well, my dear, you shall have your playmate, and I will go by myself."

Kenelm stood aghast. "You will not go, Miss Mordaunt; Mrs Braefield will be so disappointed. And if you don't go, whom shall I have to talk to? I don't like grown-up people better than you do."

"You are going?"

“Certainly.”

“And if I go you will talk to me? I am afraid of Mr Braefield. He is so wise.”

“I will save you from him, and will not utter a grain of wisdom.”

“Aunty, I will go.”

Here Lily made a bound and caught up Blanche, who, taking her kisses resignedly, stared with evident curiosity upon Kenelm.

Here a bell within the house rung the announcement of luncheon. Mrs Cameron invited Kenelm to partake of that meal. He felt as Romulus might have felt when first invited to taste the ambrosia of the gods. Yet certainly that luncheon was not such as might have pleased Kenelm Chillingly in the early days of The Temperance Hotel. But somehow or other of late he had lost appetite; and on this occasion a very modest share of a very slender dish of chicken fricasseed, and a few cherries daintily arranged on vine leaves, which Lily selected for him, contented him—as probably a very little ambrosia contented Romulus while feasting his eyes on Hebe.

Luncheon over, while Mrs Cameron wrote her reply to Elsie, Kenelm was conducted by Lily into her own *own* room, in vulgar parlance her *boudoir*, though it did not look as if any one ever *bouder*'d there. It was exquisitely pretty—pretty not as a woman's, but a child's dream of the own own room she would like to have—wondrously neat and cool, and pure-looking; a trellis paper, the trellis gay with roses and woodbine, and birds and butterflies; draperies of muslin, festooned with dainty tassels and ribbons; a dwarf bookcase, that seemed well stored, at least as to bindings; a dainty little writing-table in French *marqueterie*—looking too fresh and spotless to have known hard service. The casement was open, and in keeping with the trellis paper; woodbine and roses from without encroached on the window-sides, gently stirred by the faint summer breeze, and wafting sweet odours into the little room. Kenelm went to the window, and glanced on the view beyond. "I was right," he said to himself; "I divined

it." But though he spoke in a low inward whisper, Lily, who had watched his movements in surprise, overheard.

"You divined it. Divined what?"

"Nothing, nothing; I was but talking to myself."

"Tell me what you divined—I insist upon it!" and Fairy petulantly stamped her tiny foot on the floor.

"Do you? Then I obey. I have taken a lodging for a short time on the other side of the brook—Cromwell Lodge—and seeing your house as I passed, I divined that your room was in this part of it. How soft here is the view of the water! Ah! yonder is Izaak Walton's summer-house."

"Don't talk about Izaak Walton or I shall quarrel with you, as I did with Lion when he wanted me to like that cruel book."

"Who is Lion?"

"Lion—of course, my guardian. I called him Lion when I was a little child. It was on seeing in one of his books a print of a lion playing with a little child."

“Ah! I know the design well,” said Kenelm, with a slight sigh. “It is from an antique Greek gem. It is not the lion that plays with the child, it is the child that masters the lion, and the Greeks called the child ‘Love.’”

This idea seemed beyond Lily’s perfect comprehension. She paused before she answered, with the *naïveté* of a child six years old—

“I see now why I mastered Blanche, who will not make friends with any one else—I love Blanche. Ah, that reminds me—come and look at the picture.”

She went to the wall over the writing-table, drew a silk curtain aside from a small painting in a dainty velvet framework, and pointing to it, cried with triumph—“Look there! is it not beautiful?”

Kenelm had been prepared to see a landscape, or a group, or anything but what he did see—it was the portrait of Blanche when a kitten.

Little elevated though the subject was, it

was treated with graceful fancy. The kitten had evidently ceased from playing with the cotton reel that lay between her paws, and was fixing her gaze intent on a bullfinch that had lighted on a spray within her reach.

"You understand," said Lily, placing her hand on his arm and drawing him towards what she thought the best light for the picture; "It is Blanche's first sight of a bird. Look well at her face; don't you see a sudden surprise—half joy, half fear? She ceases to play with the reel. Her intellect—or, as Mr Braefield would say, 'her instinct'—is for the first time aroused. From that moment Blanche was no longer a mere kitten. And it required, oh, the most careful education, to teach her not to kill the poor little birds. She never does now, but I had such trouble with her."

"I cannot say honestly that I do see all that you do in the picture; but it seems to me very simply painted, and was, no doubt, a striking likeness of Blanche at that early age."

“So it was. Lion drew the first sketch from life with his pencil; and when he saw how pleased I was with it—he was so good—he put it on canvas, and let me sit by him while he painted it. Then he took it away, and brought it back finished and framed as you see, last May, a present for my birthday.”

“You were born in May—with the flowers.”

“The best of all the flowers are born before May—violets.”

“But they are born in the shade, and cling to it. Surely, as a child of May, you love the sun!”

“I love the sun—it is never too bright nor too warm for me. But I don’t think that, though born in May, I was born in sunlight. I feel more like my own native self when I creep into the shade and sit down alone. I can weep then.”

As she thus shyly ended, the character of her whole countenance was changed—its infantine mirthfulness was gone; a grave,

thoughtful, even a sad, expression settled on the tender eyes and the tremulous lips.

Kenelm was so touched that words failed him, and there was silence for some moments between the two. At length Kenelm said slowly—

“You say your own native self. Do you then, feel, as I often do, that there is a second, possibly a *native*, self, deep hid beneath the self—not merely what we show to the world in common (that may be merely a mask)—but the self that we ordinarily accept even when in solitude as our own; an inner innermost self; oh, so different and so rarely coming forth from its hiding-place; asserting its right of sovereignty, and putting out the other self, as the sun puts out a star?”

Had Kenelm thus spoken to a clever man of the world—to a Chillingly Mivers—to a Chillingly Gordon—they certainly would not have understood him. But to such men he never would have thus spoken. He had a vague hope that this childlike girl, despite so

much of childlike talk, would understand him ; and she did, at once.

Advancing close to him, again laying her hand on his arm, and looking up towards his bended face with startled wondering eyes, no longer sad, yet not mirthful—

“How true! You have felt that too? Where *is* that innermost self, so deep down—so deep ; yet when it does come forth, so much higher—higher—immeasurably higher than one’s everyday self? It does not tame the butterflies—it longs to get to the stars. And then—and then—ah, how soon it fades back again ! You have felt that. Does it not puzzle you ? ”

“Very much.”

“Are there no wise books about it that help to explain ? ”

“No wise books in my very limited reading even hint at the puzzle. I fancy that it is one of those insoluble questions that rest between the infant and his Maker. Mind and soul are not the same things, and what you and I call ‘ wise men ’ are always confounding the two——”

Fortunately for all parties—especially the reader ; for Kenelm had here got on the back of one of his most cherished hobbies—the distinction between psychology and metaphysics—soul and mind scientifically or logically considered—Mrs Cameron here entered the room and asked him how he liked the picture.

“Very much. I am no great judge of the art. But it pleased me at once, and now that Miss Mordaunt has interpreted the intention of the painter, I admire it yet more.”

“Lily chooses to interpret his intention in her own way, and insists that Blanche’s expression of countenance conveys an idea of her capacity to restrain her destructive instinct, and be taught to believe that it is wrong to kill birds for mere sport. For food she need not kill them, seeing that Lily takes care that she has plenty to eat. But I don’t think that Mr Melville had the slightest suspicion that he had indicated that capacity in his picture.”

“He must have done so, whether he sus-

pected it or not," said Lily positively; "otherwise he would not be truthful."

"Why not truthful?" asked Kenelm.

"Don't you see? If you were called upon to describe truthfully the character of any little child, would you only speak of such naughty impulses as all children have in common, and not even hint at the capacity to be made better?"

"Admirably put!" said Kenelm. "There is no doubt that a much fiercer animal than a cat—a tiger, for instance, or a conquering hero—may be taught to live on the kindest possible terms with the creatures on which it was its natural instinct to prey."

"Yes—yes; hear that, aunty! You remember the Happy Family that we saw, eight years ago, at Moleswick Fair, with a cat not half so nice as Blanche allowing a mouse to bite her ear? Well then, would Lion not have been shamefully false to Blanche if Lion had not——"

Lily paused and looked half shyly, half archly, at Kenelm, then added, in slow, deep-

drawn tones—"given a glimpse of her innermost self?"

"Innermost self!" repeated Mrs Cameron, perplexed, and laughing gently.

Lily stole nearer to Kenelm and whispered—

"Is not one's innermost self one's best self?"

Kenelm smiled approvingly. The fairy was rapidly deepening her spell upon him. If Lily had been his sister, his betrothed, his wife, how fondly he would have kissed her! She had expressed a thought over which he had often inaudibly brooded, and she had clothed it with all the charm of her own infantine fancy and womanlike tenderness! Goethe has said somewhere, or is reported to have said, "There is something in every man's heart, that, if you knew it, would make you hate him." What Goethe said, still more what Goethe is reported to have said, is never to be taken quite literally. No comprehensive genius—genius at once poet and thinker—ever can be so taken.

The sun shines on a dunghill. But the sun has no predilection for a dunghill. It only comprehends a dunghill as it does a rose. Still Kenelm had always regarded that loose ray from Goethe's prodigal orb with an abhorrence most unphilosophical for a philosopher so young as generally to take upon oath any words of so great a master. Kenelm thought that the root of all private benevolence, of all enlightened advance in social reform, lay in the adverse theorem—that in every man's nature there lies a something that, could we get at it, cleanse it, polish it, render it visibly clear to our eyes, would make us love him. And in this spontaneous, uncultured sympathy with the result of so many laborious struggles of his own scholastic intellect against the dogma of the German giant, he felt as if he had found a younger—true, but oh, how much more subduing, because so much younger—sister of his own man's soul.

Then came, so strongly, the sense of her sympathy with his own strange innermost

self which a man will never feel more than once in his life with a daughter of Eve, that he dared not trust himself to speak. He somewhat hurried his leave-taking.

Passing in the rear of the garden towards the bridge which led to his lodging, he found on the opposite bank, at the other end of the bridge, Mr Algernon Sidney Gale Jones, peacefully angling for trout.

“Will you not try the stream to-day, sir? Take my rod.”

Kenelm remembered that Lily had called Izaak Walton's book “a cruel one,” and shaking his head gently, went his way into the house. There he seated himself silently by the window, and looked towards the grassy lawn and the dipping willows, and the gleam of the white walls through the girdling trees, as he had looked the eve before.

“Ah!” he murmured at last, “if, as I hold, a man but tolerably good does good unconsciously merely by the act of living—if he can no more traverse his way from the cradle to

the grave, without letting fall, as he passes, the germs of strength, fertility, and beauty, than can a reckless wind or a vagrant bird, which, where it passes, leaves behind it the oak, the cornsheaf, or the flower—ah, if that be so, how tenfold the good must be, if the man find the gentler and purer duplicate of his own being in that mysterious, undefinable union which Shakespeares and day-labourers equally agree to call love; which Newton never recognises, and which Descartes (his only rival in the realms of thought at once severe and imaginative) reduces into links of early association, explaining that he loved women who squinted because, when he was a boy, a girl with that infirmity squinted at him from the other side of his father's garden-wall! Ah! be this union between man and woman what it may; if it be really love—really the bond which embraces the innermost and bettermost self of both—how, daily, hourly, momentarily, should we bless God for having made it so easy to be happy and to be good!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE dinner-party at Mr Braefield's was not quite so small as Kenelm had anticipated. When the merchant heard from his wife that Kenelm was coming, he thought it would be but civil to the young gentleman to invite a few other persons to meet him.

"You see, my dear," he said to Elsie, "Mrs Cameron is a very good, simple sort of woman, but not particularly amusing; and Lily, though a pretty girl, is so exceedingly childish. We owe much, my sweet Elsie, to this Mr Chillingly"—here there was a deep tone of feeling in his voice and look—"and we must make it as pleasant for him as we can. I will bring down my friend Sir Thomas, and you ask Mr Emlyn and his wife. Sir

Thomas is a very sensible man, and Emlyn a very learned one. So Mr Chillingly will find people worth talking to. By-the-by; when I go to town I will send down a haunch of venison from Groves'."

So when Kenelm arrived, a little before six o'clock, he found in the drawing-room the Rev. Charles Emlyn, vicar of Moleswick Proper, with his spouse, and a portly middle-aged man, to whom, as Sir Thomas Pratt, Kenelm was introduced. Sir Thomas was an eminent city banker. The ceremonies of introduction over, Kenelm stole to Elsie's side.

"I thought I was to meet Mrs Cameron. I don't see her."

"She will be here presently. It looks as if it might rain, and I have sent the carriage for her and Lily. Ah, here they are!"

Mrs Cameron entered, clothed in black silk. She always wore black; and behind her came Lily, in the spotless colour that became her name; no ornament, save a slender gold chain to which was appended a simple locket, and

a single blush rose in her hair. She looked wonderfully lovely ; and with that loveliness there was a certain nameless air of distinction, possibly owing to delicacy of form and colouring ; possibly to a certain grace of carriage, which was not without a something of pride.

Mr Braefield, who was a very punctual man, made a sign to his servant, and in another moment or so dinner was announced. Sir Thomas, of course, took in the hostess ; Mr Braefield, the vicar's wife (she was a dean's daughter) ; Kenelm, Mrs Cameron ; and the vicar, Lily.

On seating themselves at the table Kenelm was on the left-hand, next to the hostess, and separated from Lily by Mrs Cameron and Mr Emlyn ; and when the vicar had said grace, Lily glanced behind his back and her aunt's at Kenelm (who did the same thing) making at him what the French call a *moue*. The pledge to her had been broken. She was between two men very much grown up—the vicar and the host. Kenelm re-

turned the *moue* with a mournful smile and an involuntary shrug.

All were silent till, after his soup and his first glass of sherry, Sir Thomas began—

“I think, Mr Chillingly, we have met before, though I had not the honour then of making your acquaintance.” Sir Thomas paused before he added, “Not long ago ; the last State ball at Buckingham Palace.”

Kenelm bent his head acquiescingly. He had been at that ball.

“You were talking with a very charming woman—a friend of mine—Lady Glenalvon.”

(Sir Thomas was Lady Glenalvon’s banker.)

“I remember perfectly,” said Kenelm. “We were seated in the picture gallery. You came to speak to Lady Glenalvon, and I yielded to you my place on the settee.”

“Quite true ; and I think you joined a young lady—very handsome—the great heiress, Miss Travers.”

Kenelm again bowed, and turning away as politely as he could, addressed himself to Mrs Cameron. Sir Thomas, satisfied that

he had impressed on his audience the facts of his friendship with Lady Glenalvon and his attendance at the court ball, now directed his conversational powers towards the vicar, who, utterly foiled in the attempt to draw out Lily, met the baronet's advances with the ardour of a talker too long suppressed. Kenelm continued, unmolested, to ripen his acquaintance with Mrs Cameron. She did not, however, seem to lend a very attentive ear to his preliminary commonplace remarks about scenery or weather, but at his first pause said,

“ Sir Thomas spoke about a Miss Travers : is she related to a gentleman who was once in the Guards—Leopold Travers ? ”

“ She is his daughter. Did you ever know Leopold Travers ? ”

“ I have heard him mentioned by friends of mine long ago—long ago,” replied Mrs Cameron with a sort of weary languor, not unwonted, in her voice and manner ; and then, as if dismissing the bygone reminiscence from her thoughts, changed the subject.

"Lily tells me, Mr Chillingly, that you said you were staying at Mr Jones's, Cromwell Lodge. I hope you are made comfortable there."

"Very. The situation is singularly pleasant."

"Yes, it is considered the prettiest spot on the brookside, and used to be a favourite resort for anglers ; but the trout, I believe, are grown scarce ; at least, now that the fishing in the Thames is improved, poor Mr Jones complains that his old lodgers desert him. Of course you took the rooms for the sake of the fishing. I hope the sport may be better than it is said to be."

"It is of little consequence to me ; I do not care much about fishing ; and since Miss Mordaunt calls the book which first enticed me to take to it 'a cruel one,' I feel as if the trout had become as sacred as crocodiles were to the ancient Egyptians."

"Lily is a foolish child on such matters. She cannot bear the thought of giving pain to any dumb creature ; and just before our

garden there are a few trout which she has tamed. They feed out of her hand ; she is always afraid they will wander away and get caught."

"But Mr Melville is an angler?"

"Several years ago he would sometimes pretend to fish, but I believe it was rather an excuse for lying on the grass and reading 'the cruel book,' or perhaps, rather, for sketching. But now he is seldom here till autumn, when it grows too cold for such amusement."

Here Sir Thomas's voice was so loudly raised that it stopped the conversation between Kenelm and Mrs Cameron. He had got into some question of politics on which he and the vicar did not agree, and the discussion threatened to become warm, when Mrs Braefield, with a woman's true tact, broached a new topic, in which Sir Thomas was immediately interested, relating to the construction of a conservatory for orchids that he meditated adding to his country-house, and in which frequent appeal was

made to Mrs Cameron, who was considered an accomplished florist, and who seemed at some time or other in her life to have acquired a very intimate acquaintance with the costly family of orchids.

When the ladies retired Kenelm found himself seated next to Mr Emlyn, who astounded him by a complimentary quotation from one of his own Latin prize poems at the university, hoped he would make some stay at Moleswick, told him of the principal places in the neighbourhood worth visiting, and offered him the run of his library, which he flattered himself was rather rich, both in the best editions of Greek and Latin classics and in early English literature. Kenelm was much pleased with the scholarly vicar, especially when Mr Emlyn began to speak about Mrs Cameron and Lily. Of the first he said, "She is one of those women in whom Quiet is so predominant that it is long before one can know what under-currents of good feeling flow beneath the unruffled surface. I wish, how-

ever, she was a little more active in the management and education of her niece—a girl in whom I feel a very anxious interest, and whom I doubt if Mrs Cameron understands. Perhaps, however, only a poet, and a very peculiar sort of poet, can understand her: Lily Mordaunt is herself a poem.”

“I like your definition of her,” said Kenelm. “There is certainly something about her which differs much from the prose of common life.”

“You probably know Wordsworth’s lines :

‘ . . . and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Shall pass into her face.’

They are lines that many critics have found unintelligible ; but Lily seems like the living key to them.”

Kenelm’s dark face lighted up, but he made no answer.

“Only,” continued Mr Emlyn, “how a girl of that sort, left wholly to herself, un-

trained, undisciplined, is to grow up into the practical uses of womanhood, is a question that perplexes and saddens me."

"Any more wine?" asked the host, closing a conversation on commercial matters with Sir Thomas. "No?—shall we join the ladies?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE drawing-room was deserted; the ladies were in the garden. As Kenelm and Mr Emlyn walked side by side towards the group (Sir Thomas and Mr Braefield following at a little distance), the former asked, somewhat abruptly, "What sort of man is Miss Cameron's guardian, Mr Melville?"

"I can scarcely answer that question. I see little of him when he comes here. Formerly, he used to run down pretty often with a harum-scarum set of young fellows, quartered at Cromwell Lodge—Grasmere had no accommodation for them—students in the Academy, I suppose. For some years he has not brought those persons, and when he does come himself it is but for a few days. He has the reputation of being very wild."

Further conversation was here stopped. The two men, while they thus talked, had been diverging from the straight way across the lawn towards the ladies, turning into sequestered paths, through the shrubbery; now they emerged into the open sward, just before a table, on which coffee was served, and round which all the rest of the party were gathered.

"I hope, Mr Emlyn," said Elsie's cheery voice, "that you have dissuaded Mr Chillingly from turning papist. I am sure you have taken time enough to do so."

Mr Emlyn, protestant every inch of him, slightly recoiled from Kenelm's side. "Do you meditate turning——" He could not conclude the sentence.

"Be not alarmed, my dear sir. I did but own to Mr Braefield that I had paid a visit to Oxford in order to confer with a learned man on a question that puzzled me, and as abstract as that feminine pastime, theology, is now-a-days. I cannot convince Mrs Braefield that Oxford admits

other puzzles in life than those which amuse the ladies." Here Kenelm dropped into a chair by the side of Lily.

Lily half-turned her back to him.

"Have I offended again?"

Lily shrugged her shoulders slightly and would not answer.

"I suspect, Miss Mordaunt, that among your good qualities, nature has omitted one; the bettermost self within you should replace it."

Lily here abruptly turned to him her front face—the light of the skies was becoming dim, but the evening star shone upon it.

"How! what do you mean?"

"Am I to answer politely or truthfully?"

"Truthfully! Oh, truthfully! What is life without truth?"

"Even though one believes in fairies?"

"Fairies are truthful, in a certain way. But you are not truthful. You were not thinking of fairies when you—"

"When I what?"

“Found fault with me!”

“I am not sure of that. But I will translate to you my thoughts, so far as I can read them myself, and to do so I will resort to the fairies. Let us suppose that a fairy has placed her changeling into the cradle of a mortal; that into the cradle she drops all manner of fairy gifts, which are not bestowed on mere mortals; but that one mortal attribute she forgets. The changeling grows up, she charms those around her; they humour, and pet, and spoil her. But there arises a moment in which the omission of the one mortal gift is felt by her admirers and friends. Guess what that is.”

Lily pondered. “I see what you mean; the reverse of truthfulness, politeness.”

“No, not exactly that, though politeness slides into it unawares; it is a very humble quality, a very unpoetic quality; a quality that many dull people possess; and yet without it no fairy can fascinate mortals, when on the face of the fairy settles the first wrinkle. Can you not guess it now?”

“No ; you vex me, you provoke me ;” and Lily stamped her foot petulantly, as in Kenelm’s presence she had stamped it once before. “Speak plainly, I insist.”

“Miss Mordaunt, excuse me, I dare not,” said Kenelm, rising with the sort of bow one makes to the Queen ; and he crossed over to Mrs Braefield.

Lily remained, still pouting fiercely.

Sir Thomas took the chair Kenelm had vacated.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE hour for parting came. Of all the guests, Sir Thomas alone staid at the house a guest for the night. Mr and Mrs Emlyn had their own carriage. Mrs Braefield's carriage came to the door for Mrs Cameron and Lily.

Said Lily, impatiently and discourteously, "Who would not rather walk on such a night?" and she whispered to her aunt.

Mrs Cameron, listening to the whisper, and obedient to every whim of Lily's, said, "You are too considerate, dear Mrs Braefield, Lily prefers walking home; there is no chance of rain now."

Kenelm followed the steps of the aunt and niece, and soon overtook them on the brookside.

"A charming night, Mr Chillingly," said Mrs Cameron.

"An English summer night; nothing like it in such parts of the world as I have visited. But, alas! of English summer nights there are but few."

"You have travelled much abroad?"

"Much—no, a little; chiefly on foot."

Lily hitherto had not said a word, and had been walking with downcast head. Now she looked up and said, in the mildest and most conciliatory of human voices—

"You have been abroad," then, with an acquiescence in the manners of the world which to him she had never yet manifested, she added his name, "Mr Chillingly," and went on, more familiarly. "What a breadth of meaning the word 'abroad' conveys! Away, afar from oneself, from one's every-day life. How I envy you! you have been abroad: so has Lion"—(Here drawing herself up)—"I mean my guardian, Mr Melville."

"Certainly, I have been abroad; but

afar from myself—never. It is an old saying—all old sayings are true, most new sayings are false—a man carries his native soil at the sole of his foot.”

Here the path somewhat narrowed. Mrs Cameron went on first, Kenelm and Lily behind; she, of course, on the dry path, he on the dewy grass.

She stopped him. “You are walking in the wet, and with those thin shoes.” Lily moved instinctively away from the dry path.

Homely though that speech of Lily’s be, and absurd as said by a fragile girl to a gladiator like Kenelm, it lit up a whole world of womanhood—it showed all that undiscoverable land which was hidden to the learned Mr Emlyn, all that land which an uncomprehended girl seizes and reigns over when she becomes wife and mother.

At that homely speech, and that impulsive movement, Kenelm halted, in a sort of dreaming maze. He turned timidly—

"Can you forgive me for my rude words? I presumed to find fault with you."

"And so justly. I have been thinking over all you said, and I feel you were so right; only I still do not quite understand what you meant by the quality for mortals which the fairy did not give to her changeling."

"If I did not dare say it before, I should still less dare to say it now."

"Do." There was no longer the stamp of the foot, no longer the flash from her eyes, no longer the wilfulness which said "I insist;"—"Do," soothingly, sweetly, imploringly.

Thus pushed to it, Kenelm plucked up courage, and not trusting himself to look at Lily, answered brusquely:

"The quality desirable for men, but more essential to women in proportion as they are fairy-like, though the tritest thing possible, is good temper."

Lily made a sudden bound from his side, and joined her aunt, walking through the wet grass.

When they reached the garden-gate Kenelm advanced and opened it. Lily passed him by haughtily; they gained the cottage-door.

"I don't ask you in at this hour," said Mrs Cameron. "It would be but a false compliment."

Kenelm bowed and retreated. Lily left her aunt's side, and came towards him, extending her hand.

"I shall consider your words, Mr Chillingly," she said, with a strangely majestic air. "At present I think you are not right. I am not ill-tempered; but" — here she paused, and then added with a loftiness of mien which, had she not been so exquisitely pretty, would have been rudeness — "in any case I forgive you."

CHAPTER IX.

THERE were a good many pretty villas in the outskirts of Moleswick, and the owners of them were generally well off, and yet there was little of what is called visiting society — owing, perhaps, to the fact that there not being among these proprietors any persons belonging to what is commonly called “the aristocratic class,” there was a vast deal of aristocratic pretension. The family of Mr A——, who had enriched himself as a stock-jobber, turned up its nose at the family of Mr B——, who had enriched himself still more as a linendraper, while the family of Mr B—— showed a very cold shoulder to the family of Mr C——, who had become richer than either of them as a pawnbroker, and whose wife wore diamonds,

but dropped her h's. England would be a community so aristocratic that there would be no living in it, if one could exterminate what is now called "aristocracy." The Braefields were the only persons who really drew together the antagonistic atoms of the Moleswick society, partly because they were acknowledged to be the first persons there, in right not only of old settlement (the Braefields had held Braefieldville for four generations), but of the wealth derived from those departments of commercial enterprise which are recognised as the highest, and of an establishment considered to be the most elegant in the neighbourhood; principally because Elsie, while exceedingly genial and cheerful in temper, had a certain power of will (as her runaway folly had manifested), and when she got people together compelled them to be civil to each other. She had commenced this gracious career by inaugurating children's parties, and when the children became friends the parents necessarily grew closer together. Still her task

had only recently begun, and its effects were not in full operation. Thus, though it became known at Moleswick that a young gentleman, the heir to a baronetcy and a high estate, was sojourning at Cromwell Lodge, no overtures were made to him on the part of the A's, B's, and C's. The vicar, who called on Kenelm the day after the dinner at Braefieldville, explained to him the social conditions of the place. "You understand," said he, "that it will be from no want of courtesy on the part of my neighbours if they do not offer you any relief from the pleasures of solitude. It will be simply because they are shy, not because they are uncivil. And it is this consideration that makes me, at the risk of seeming too forward, entreat you to look into the vicarage any morning or evening on which you feel tired of your own company—suppose you drink tea with us this evening—you will find a young lady whose heart you have already won."

"Whose heart I have won!" faltered

Kenelm, and the warm blood rushed to his cheek.

"But," continued the vicar, smiling, "she has no matrimonial designs on you at present. She is only twelve years old—my little girl Clemmy."

"Clemmy!—She is your daughter. I did not know that. I very gratefully accept your invitation."

"I must not keep you longer from your amusement. The sky is just clouded enough for sport. What fly do you use?"

"To say truth, I doubt if the stream has much to tempt me in the way of its trout, and I prefer rambling about the lanes and by-paths to

'The noiseless angler's solitary stand.'

I am an indefatigable walker, and the home scenery round the place has many charms for me. Besides," added Kenelm, feeling conscious that he ought to find some more plausible excuse than the charms of home scenery for locating himself long in Crom-

well Lodge—"besides—I intend to devote myself a good deal to reading. I have been very idle of late, and the solitude of this place must be favourable to study."

"You are not intended, I presume, for any of the learned professions?"

"The learned professions," replied Kenelm, "is an invidious form of speech that we are doing our best to eradicate from the language. All professions nowadays are to have much about the same amount of learning. The learning of the military profession is to be levelled upwards—the learning of the scholastic to be levelled downwards. Cabinet ministers sneer at the uses of Greek and Latin. And even such masculine studies as Law and Medicine are to be adapted to the measurements of taste and propriety in colleges for young ladies. No, I am not intended for any profession; but still an ignorant man like myself may not be the worse for a little book-reading now and then."

"You seem to be badly provided with

books here," said the vicar, glancing round the room, in which, on a table in the corner, lay half-a-dozen old-looking volumes, evidently belonging not to the lodger but the landlord. "But, as I before said, my library is at your service. What branch of reading do you prefer?"

Kenelm was, and looked, puzzled. But after a pause he answered:

"The more remote it be from the present day, the better for me. You said your collection was rich in mediæval literature. But the Middle Ages are so copied by the modern Goths, that I might as well read translations of Chaucer, or take lodgings in Wardour Street. If you have any books about the manners and habits of those who, according to the newest idea in science, were our semi-human progenitors in the transition state between a marine animal and a gorilla, I should be very much edified by the loan."

"Alas," said Mr Emlyn, laughing, "no such books have been left to us."

"No such books? You must be mis-

taken. There must be plenty of them somewhere. I grant all the wonderful powers of invention bestowed on the creators of poetic romance; still not the sovereign masters in that realm of literature—not Scott, not Cervantes, not Goethe, not even Shakespeare—could have presumed to rebuild the past without such materials as they found in the books that record it. And though I, no less cheerfully, grant that we have now living among us a creator of poetic romance immeasurably more inventive than they—appealing to our credulity in portents the most monstrous, with a charm of style the most conversationally familiar—still I cannot conceive that even that unrivalled romance-writer can so bewitch our understandings as to make us believe, that, if Miss Mordaunt's cat dislikes to wet her feet, it is probably because in the pre-historic age her ancestors lived in the dry country of Egypt; or that when some lofty orator, a Pitt or a Gladstone, rebuts with a polished smile which reveals his canine teeth the

rude assault of an opponent, he betrays his descent from a "semi-human progenitor" who was accustomed to snap at his enemy. Surely—surely there must be some books still extant written by philosophers before the birth of Adam, in which there is authority, even though but in mythic fable, for such poetic inventions. Surely—surely some early chroniclers must depose that they saw, saw with their own eyes, the great gorillas who scratched off their hairy coverings to please the eyes of the young ladies of their species, and that they noted the gradual metamorphosis of one animal into another. For, if you tell me that this illustrious romance-writer is but a cautious man of science, and that we must accept his inventions according to the sober laws of evidence and fact, there is not the most incredible ghost story which does not better satisfy the common sense of a sceptic. However, if you have no such books, lend me the most unphilosophical you possess—on magic, for instance—the philosopher's stone——"

"I have some of them," said the vicar, laughing, "you shall choose for yourself."

"If you are going homeward, let me accompany you part of the way—I don't yet know where the church and the vicarage are, and I ought to know before I come in the evening.

Kenelm and the vicar walked side by side, very sociably, across the bridge and on the side of the rivulet on which stood Mrs Cameron's cottage. As they skirted the garden pale at the rear of the cottage, Kenelm suddenly stopped in the middle of some sentence which had interested Mr Emlyn, and as suddenly arrested his steps on the turf that bordered the lane. A little before him stood an old peasant woman, with whom Lily, on the opposite side of the garden pale, was conversing. Mr Emlyn did not at first see what Kenelm saw; turning round rather to gaze on his companion, surprised by his abrupt halt and silence. The girl put a small basket into the old woman's hand, who then dropped a low

curtsey, and uttered low a "God bless you." Low though it was, Kenelm overheard it, and said abstractedly to Mr Emlyn, "Is there a greater link between this life and the next than God's blessing on the young, breathed from the lips of the old?"

CHAPTER X.

“AND how is your good man, Mrs Haley?” said the vicar, who had now reached the spot on which the old woman stood—with Lily’s fair face still bended down to her—while Kenelm slowly followed him.

“Thank you kindly, sir, he is better—out of his bed now. The young lady has done him a power of good——”

“Hush!” said Lily, colouring. “Make haste home now; you must not keep him waiting for his dinner.”

The old woman again curtseyed, and went off at a brisk pace.

“Do you know, Mr Chillingly,” said Mr Emlyn, “that Miss Mordaunt is the best doctor in the place? Though if she goes on making so many cures she will find the

number of her patients rather burthen-some."

"It was only the other day," said Lily, "that you scolded me for the best cure I have yet made."

"I?—Oh! I remember; you led that silly child Madge to believe that there was a fairy charm in the arrowroot you sent her. Own you deserved a scolding there."

"No, I did not. I dress the arrowroot, and am I not Fairy? I have just got such a pretty note from Clemmy, Mr Emlyn, asking me to come up this evening and see her new magic-lantern. Will you tell her to expect me? And—mind—no scolding."

"And all magic?" said Mr Emlyn; "be it so."

Lily and Kenelm had not hitherto exchanged a word. She had replied with a grave inclination of her head to his silent bow. But now she turned to him shyly and said, "I suppose you have been fishing all the morning?"

"No; the fishes hereabout are under the

protection of a Fairy—whom I dare not displease.”

Lily’s face brightened, and she extended her hand to him over the palings. “Good day; I hear aunty’s voice—those dreadful French verbs!”

She disappeared among the shrubs, amid which they heard the trill of her fresh young voice singing to herself.

“That child has a heart of gold,” said Mr Emlyn, as the two men walked on. “I did not exaggerate when I said she was the best doctor in the place. I believe the poor really do believe that she is a Fairy. Of course we send from the vicarage to our ailing parishioners who require it food and wine; but it never seems to do them the good that her little dishes made by her own tiny hands do; and I don’t know if you noticed the basket that old woman took away—Miss Lily taught Will Gower to make the prettiest little baskets; and she puts her jellies or other savories into dainty porcelain gallipots nicely fitting into the baskets, which she

trims with ribbons. It is the look of the thing that tempts the appetite of the invalids, and certainly the child may well be called Fairy at present; but I wish Miss Cameron would attend a little more strictly to her education. She can't be a Fairy for ever."

Kenelm sighed, but made no answer.

Mr Emlyn then turned the conversation to erudite subjects, and so they came in sight of the town, when the vicar stopped and pointed towards the church, of which the spire rose a little to the left, with two aged yew-trees half shadowing the burial-ground, and in the rear a glimpse of the vicarage seen amid the shrubs of its garden ground.

"You will know your way now," said the vicar; "excuse me if I quit you, I have a few visits to make; among others, to poor Haley, husband to the old woman you saw. I read to him a chapter in the Bible every day; yet still I fancy that he believes in fairy charms."

“Better believe too much, than too little,” said Kenelm; and he turned aside into the village, and spent half-an-hour with Will, looking at the pretty baskets Lily had taught Will to make. Then, as he went slowly homeward, he turned aside into the churchyard.

The church, built in the thirteenth century, was not large, but it probably sufficed for its congregation, since it betrayed no signs of modern addition; restoration or repair it needed not. The centuries had but mellowed the tints of its solid walls, as little injured by the huge ivy stems that shot forth their aspiring leaves to the very summit of the stately tower, as by the slender roses which had been trained to climb up a foot or so of the massive buttresses. The site of the burial-ground was unusually picturesque: sheltered towards the north by a rising ground clothed with woods, sloping down at the south towards the glebe pasture grounds through which ran the brooklet, sufficiently near for its brawling gurgle to be heard

on a still day. Kenelm sat himself on an antique tomb, which was evidently appropriated to some one of higher than common rank in bygone days, but on which the sculpture was wholly obliterated.

The stillness and solitude of the place had their charm for his meditative temperament; and he remained there long, forgetful of time, and scarcely hearing the boom of the clock that warned him of its lapse.

When suddenly, a shadow—the shadow of a human form—fell on the grass on which his eyes dreamily rested. He looked up with a start, and beheld Lily standing before him mute and still. Her image was so present in his thoughts at the moment that he felt a thrill of awe, as if the thoughts had conjured up her apparition. She was the first to speak.

“You here, too?” she said very softly, almost whisperingly.

“Too!” echoed Kenelm, rising; “too! ’Tis no wonder that I, a stranger to the place, should find my steps attracted towards

its most venerable building. Even the most careless traveller, halting at some remote abodes of the living, turns aside to gaze on the burial-ground of the dead. But my surprise is that you, Miss Mordaunt, should be attracted towards the same spot."

"It is my favourite spot," said Lily, "and always has been. I have sat many an hour on that tombstone. It is strange to think that no one knows who sleeps beneath it. The 'Guide Book to Moleswick,' though it gives the history of the church from the reign in which it was first built, can only venture a guess that this tomb, the grandest and oldest in the burial-ground, is tenanted by some member of a family named Montfichet, that was once very powerful in the county, and has become extinct since the reign of Henry the Sixth. But," added Lily "there is not a letter of the name Montfichet left. I found out more than any one else has done—I learned black-letter on purpose; look here," and she pointed to a small spot in which the moss had been removed. "Do you see those

figures, are they not XVIII? and look again, in what was once the line above the figures, ELE. It must have been an Eleanor, who died at the age of eighteen——”

“I rather think it more probable that the figures refer to the date of the death, 1318 perhaps; and so far as I can decipher black-letter, which is more in my father’s line than mine, I think it is A L, not E L, and that it seems as if there had been a letter between L and the second E, which is now effaced. The tomb itself is not likely to belong to any powerful family then resident at the place. Their monuments, according to usage, would have been within the church; probably in their own mortuary chapel.”

“Don’t try to destroy my fancy,” said Lily, shaking her head; “you cannot succeed, I know *her* history too well. She was young, and some one loved her, and built over her the finest tomb he could afford; and see how long the epitaph must have been! how much it must have spoken in her praise, and of his grief. And then he went his way,

and the tomb was neglected, and her fate forgotten."

"My dear Miss Mordaunt, this is indeed a wild romance to spin out of so slender a thread. But even if true, there is no reason to think that a life is forgotten though a tomb be neglected."

"Perhaps not," said Lily thoughtfully. "But when I am dead, if I can look down, I think it would please me to see my grave not neglected by those who had loved me once."

She moved from him as she said this, and went to a little mound that seemed not long since raised; there was a simple cross at the head and a narrow border of flowers round it. Lily knelt beside the flowers and pulled out a stray weed. Then she rose, and said to Kenelm who had followed, and now stood beside her :

"She was the little grandchild of poor old Mrs Hales. I could not cure her though I tried hard; she was so fond of me, and died in my arms. No, let me not say 'died,'

surely there is no such thing as dying.
'Tis but a change of life :

“ ‘Less than the void between two waves of air,
The space between existence and a soul.’ ”

“ Whose lines are those ? ” asked Kenelm.

“ I don’t know ; I learnt them from Lion.
Don’t you believe them to be true ? ”

“ Yes ! But the truth does not render the thought of quitting this scene of life for another more pleasing to most of us. See how soft and gentle and bright is all that living summer land beyond ; let us find subject for talk from that, not from the graveyard on which we stand.”

“ But is there not a summer land fairer than that we see now ; and which we do see, as in a dream, best when we take subjects of talk from the graveyard ? ” Without waiting for a reply Lily went on : “ I planted these flowers ; Mr Emlyn was angry with me, he said it was ‘popish.’ But he had not the heart to have them taken up ; I come here very often to see to them. Do

you think it wrong? Poor little Nell!—she was so fond of flowers. And the Eleanor in the great tomb, she too perhaps knew some one who called her Nell; but there are no flowers round her tomb—Poor Eleanor.”

She took the nosegay she wore on her bosom, and as she repassed the tomb laid it on the mouldering stone.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY quitted the burial ground, taking their way to Grasmere. Kenelm walked by Lily's side; not a word passed between them till they came in sight of the cottage.

Then Lily stopped abruptly, and lifting towards him her charming face, said :

“I told you I would think over what you said to me last night. I have done so, and feel I can thank you honestly. You were very kind; I never before thought that I had a bad temper, no one ever told me so. But I see now what you mean—sometimes I feel very quickly, and then I show it. But how did I show it to you, Mr Chillingly?”

“Did you not turn your back to me when

I seated myself next you in Mrs Braefield's garden, vouchsafing me no reply when I asked if I had offended?"

Lily's face became bathed in blushes, and her voice faltered, as she answered.

"I was not offended, I was not in a bad temper then, it was worse than that."

"Worse—what could it possibly be?"

"I am afraid it was envy."

"Envy of what—of whom?"

"I don't know how to explain; after all I fear aunty is right, and the fairy tales put very silly, very naughty, thoughts into one's head. When Cinderella's sisters went to the king's ball, and Cinderella was left alone, did not she long to go too? Did not she envy her sisters?"

"Ah! I understand now—Sir Charles spoke of the Court Ball."

"And you were there talking with handsome ladies—and—Oh! I was so foolish and felt sore."

"You, who when we first met wondered how people who could live in the country

preferred to live in towns, do then sometimes contradict yourself, and sigh for the great world that lies beyond these quiet water banks. You feel that you have youth and beauty, and wish to be admired!"

"It is not that exactly," said Lily, with a perplexed look in her ingenuous countenance, "and in my better moments, when the 'bettermost self' comes forth, I know that I am not made for the great world you speak of. But you see—" Here she paused again, and as they had now entered the garden dropped wearily on a bench beside the path. Kenelm seated himself there too, waiting for her to finish her broken sentence.

"You see," she continued, looking down embarrassed, and describing vague circles on the gravel with her fairy-like foot, "that at home, ever since I can remember, they have treated me as if, well as if I were—what shall I say?—the child of one of your great ladies. Even Lion, who is so noble, so grand, seemed to think when I was a mere infant that I was a little queen; once when

I told a fib he did not scold me, but I never saw him look so sad and so angry as when he said, 'never again forget' that you are a lady.' And, but I tire you——

"Tire me, indeed! go on."

"No, I have said enough to explain why I have at times proud thoughts, and vain thoughts; and why for instance I said to myself: 'Perhaps my place of right is among those fine ladies whom he'—but it is all over now." She rose hastily with a pretty laugh, and bounded towards Mrs Cameron, who was walking slowly along the lawn with a book in her hand.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a very merry party at the vicarage that evening. Lily had not been prepared to meet Kenelm there, and her face brightened wonderfully as at her entrance he turned from the bookshelves to which Mr Emlyn was directing his attention. But instead of meeting his advance she darted off to the lawn, where Clemmy and several other children greeted her with a joyous shout."

"Not acquainted with Maclean's '*Juvenal*'?" said the reverend scholar; "you will be greatly pleased with it—here it is—a posthumous work, edited by George Long. I can lend you Munro's *Lucretius*, '69. Aha! we have some scholars yet to pit against the Germans."

"I am heartily glad to hear it," said Kenelm. "It will be a long time before they will ever wish to rival us in that game which Miss Clemmy is now forming on the lawn, and in which England has recently acquired an European reputation."

"I don't take you. What game?"

"Puss in the Corner. With your leave I will look out and see whether it be a winning game for puss—in the long run." Kenelm joined the children, amidst whom Lily seemed not the least childlike. Resisting all overtures from Clemmy to join in their play, he seated himself on a sloping bank at a little distance—an idle looker on. His eye followed Lily's nimble movements, his ear drank in the music of her joyous laugh. Could that be the same girl whom he had seen tending the flower bed amid the grave-stones! Mrs Emlyn came across the lawn and joined him, seating herself also on the bank. Mrs Emlyn was an exceedingly clever woman; nevertheless she was not formidable, on the contrary pleasing; and

though the ladies in the neighbourhood said 'she talked like a book,' the easy gentleness of her voice carried off that offence.

"I suppose, Mr Chillingly," said she, "I ought to apologize for my husband's invitation to what must seem to you so frivolous an entertainment as a child's party. But when Mr Emlyn asked you to come to us this evening, he was not aware that Clemmy had also invited her young friends. He had looked forward to a rational conversation with you on his own favourite studies."

"It is not so long since I left school, but that I prefer a half holiday to lessons, even from a tutor so pleasant as Mr Emlyn—

'Ah, happy years—once more who would not be a boy!'"

"Nay," said Mrs Emlyn with a grave smile. "Who that had started so fairly as Mr Chillingly in the career of man would wish to go back and resume a place among boys?"

"But, my dear Mrs Emlyn, the line I quoted was wrung from the heart of a man

who had already outstripped all rivals in the raceground he had chosen, and who at that moment was in the very Maytime of youth and of fame. And if such a man at such an epoch in his career could sigh to 'be once more a boy,' it must have been when he was thinking of the boy's half holiday, and recoiling from the taskwork he was condemned to learn as man."

"The line you quote is, I think, from Childe Harold, and surely you would not apply to mankind in general the sentiment of a poet so peculiarly self-reflecting (if I may use that expression), and in whom sentiment is often so morbid."

"You are right, Mrs Emlyn," said Kenelm ingenuously. "Still a boy's half holiday is a very happy thing; and among mankind in general, there must be many who would be glad to have it back again. Mr Emlyn himself, I should think."

"Mr Emlyn has his half holiday now. Do you not see him standing just outside the window? Do you not hear him laugh-

ing? He is a child again in the mirth of his children. I hope you will stay some time in the neighbourhood, I am sure you and he will like each other. And it is such a rare delight to him to get a scholar like yourself to talk to."

"Pardon me, I am not a scholar—a very noble title that, and not to be given to a lazy trifler on the surface of book-lore like myself."

"You are too modest. My husband has a copy of your Cambridge prize verses, and says 'the Latinity of them is quite beautiful.' I quote his very words."

"Latin verse making is a mere knack, little more than a proof that one had an elegant scholar for one's tutor, as I certainly had. But it is by special grace that a real scholar can send forth another real scholar, and a Kennedy produce a Munro. But to return to the more interesting question of half holidays; I declare that Clemmy is leading off your husband in triumph. He is actually going to be Puss in the Corner."

“When you know more of Charles—I mean my husband—you will discover that his whole life is more or less of a holiday. Perhaps because he is not what you accuse yourself of being—he is not lazy; he never wishes to be a boy once more; and task-work itself is holiday to him. He enjoys shutting himself up in his study and reading—he enjoys a walk with the children—he enjoys visiting the poor—he enjoys his duties as a clergyman. And though I am not always contented for him, though I think he should have had those honours in his profession which have been lavished on men with less ability and less learning, yet he is never discontented himself. Shall I tell you his secret?”

“Do.”

“He is a *Thanks-giving Man*. You, too, must have much to thank God for, Mr Chillingly; and in thanksgiving to God does there not blend usefulness to man, and such sense of pastime in the usefulness as makes each day a holiday?”

Kenelm looked up into the quiet face of this obscure pastor's wife with a startled expression in his own.

"I see, ma'am," said he, "that you have devoted much thought to the study of the æsthetical philosophy as expounded by German thinkers, whom it is rather difficult to understand."

"I, Mr Chillingly—good gracious. No! What do you mean by your æsthetical philosophy?"

"According to æsthetics, I believe man arrives at his highest state of moral excellence when labour and duty lose all the harshness of effort—when they become the impulse and habit of life; when, as the essential attributes of the beautiful, they are, like beauty, enjoyed as pleasure; and thus, as you expressed, each day becomes a holiday. A lovely doctrine, not perhaps so lofty as that of the Stoics, but more bewitching. Only, very few of us can practically merge our cares and our worries into so serene an atmosphere."

“Some do so without knowing anything of æsthetics and with no pretence to be Stoics ; but, then, they are Christians.”

“There are some such Christians, no doubt, but they are rarely to be met with. Take Christendom altogether, and it appears to comprise the most agitated population in the world ; the population in which there is the greatest grumbling as to the quantity of labour to be done, the loudest complaints that duty instead of a pleasure is a very hard and disagreeable struggle, and in which holidays are fewest and the moral atmosphere least serene. Perhaps,” added Kenelm, with a deeper shade of thought on his brow, “it is this perpetual consciousness of struggle ; this difficulty in merging toil into ease, or stern duty into placid enjoyment ; this refusal to ascend for one’s self into the calm of an air aloof from the cloud which darkens, and the hailstorm which beats upon, the fellow men we leave below ; that makes the troubled life of Christendom dearer to heaven, and more conducive to heaven’s design in

rendering earth the wrestling ground and not the resting place of man, than is that of the Brahmin, ever seeking to abstract himself from the Christian's conflicts of action and desire, and to carry into its extremest practice the æsthetic theory, of basking undisturbed in the contemplation of the most absolute beauty human thought can reflect from its idea of divine good !”

Whatever Mrs Emlyn might have said in reply was interrupted by the rush of the children towards her ; they were tired of play, and eager for tea and the magic lantern.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE room is duly obscured and the white sheet attached to the wall; the children are seated, hushed, and awe-stricken. And Kenelm is placed next to Lily.

The tritest things in our mortal experience are among the most mysterious. There is more mystery in the growth of a blade of grass than there is in the wizard's mirror or the feats of a spirit medium. Most of us have known the attraction that draws one human being to another, and makes it so exquisite a happiness to sit quiet and mute by another's side; which stills for the moment the busiest thoughts in our brain, the most turbulent desires in our heart, and renders us but conscious of a

present ineffable bliss. Most of us have known that. But who has ever been satisfied with any metaphysical account of its why or wherefore? We can but say it is love, and love at that earlier section of its history which has not yet escaped from romance: but by what process that other person has become singled out of the whole universe to attain such special power over one, is a problem that, though many have attempted to solve it, has never attained to solution. In the dim light of the room Kenelm could only distinguish the outlines of Lily's delicate face, but at each new surprise in the show, the face intuitively turned to his, and once, when the terrible image of a sheeted ghost, pursuing a guilty man, passed along the wall, she drew closer to him in her childish fright, and by an involuntary innocent movement laid her hand on his. He detained it tenderly, but, alas! it was withdrawn the next moment; the ghost was succeeded by a couple of dancing dogs. And Lily's ready laugh—partly at the dogs,

partly at her own previous alarm—vexed Kenelm's ear. He wished there had been a succession of ghosts, each more appalling than the last.

The entertainment was over, and after a slight refreshment of cakes and wine-and-water the party broke up; the children-visitors went away attended by servant-maids who had come for them. Mrs Cameron and Lily were to walk home on foot.

"It is a lovely night, Mrs Cameron," said Mr Emlyn, "and I will attend you to your gate."

"Permit me also," said Kenelm.

"Ay," said the vicar, "it is your own way to Cromwell Lodge."

The path led them through the church-yard as the nearest approach to the brook-side. The moonbeams shimmered through the yew-trees and rested on the old tomb—playing, as it were, round the flowers which Lily's hand had, that day, dropped upon its stone. She was walking beside Kenelm—the elder two a few paces in front.

“How silly I was,” said she, “to be so frightened at the false ghost! I don’t think a real one would frighten me, at least if seen here, in this loving moonlight, and on God’s ground!”

“Ghosts, were they permitted to appear except in a magic lantern, could not harm the innocent. And I wonder why the idea of their apparition should always have been associated with such phantasies of horror, especially by sinless children, who have the least reason to dread them.”

“Oh, that is true,” cried Lily; “but even when we are grown up there must be times in which we should so long to see a ghost, and feel what a comfort, what a joy it would be.”

“I understand you. If some one very dear to us had vanished from our life; if we felt the anguish of the separation so intensely as to efface the thought that life, as you said so well, ‘never dies;’ well, yes, then I can conceive that the mourner would yearn to have a glimpse of the vanished one, were it

but to ask the sole and only question he could desire to put: "Art thou happy? May I hope that we shall meet again, never to part—never?"

Kenelm's voice trembled as he spoke, tears stood in his eyes. A melancholy, vague, unaccountable, overpowering, passed across his heart, as the shadow of some dark-winged bird passes over a quiet stream.

"You have never yet felt this?" asked Lily doubtfully, in a soft voice, full of tender pity, stopping short and looking into his face.

"I? No. I have never yet lost one whom I so loved and so yearned to see again. I was but thinking that such losses may befall us all ere we too vanish out of sight."

"Lily!" called forth Mrs Cameron, halting at the gate of the burial-ground.

"Yes, auntie?"

"Mr Emlyn wants to know how far you have got in 'Numa Pompilius.' Come and answer for yourself."

“Oh, those tiresome grown-up people!” whispered Lily, petulantly, to Kenelm. “I do like Mr Emlyn; he is one of the very best of men. But still he is grown up; and his ‘Numa Pompilius’ is so stupid.”

“My first French lesson-book. No, it is not stupid. Read on. It has hints of the prettiest fairy tale I know, and of the fairy in especial who bewitched my fancies as a boy.”

By this time they had gained the gate of the burial-ground.

“What fairy tale? what fairy?” asked Lily, speaking quickly.

“She was a fairy, though in heathen language she is called a nymph—Egeria. She was the link between men and gods to him she loved; she belongs to the race of gods. True; she, too, may vanish, but she can never die.”

“Well, Miss Lily,” said the vicar, “and how far in the book I lent you—‘Numa Pompilius’?”

“Ask me this day next week.”

"I will ; but mind you are to translate as you go on. I must see the translation."

"Very well. I will do my best," answered Lily meekly.

Lily now walked by the vicar's side, and Kenelm by Mrs Cameron's, till they reached Grasmere.

"I will go on with you to the bridge, Mr Chillingly," said the vicar, when the ladies had disappeared within their garden.

"We had little time to look over my books, and, by-the-by, I hope you at least took the 'Juvenal.'"

"No, Mr Emlyn ; who can quit your house with an inclination for satire ? I must come some morning and select a volume from those works which give pleasant views of life and bequeath favourable impressions of mankind. Your wife, with whom I have had an interesting conversation upon the principles of æsthetical philosophy——"

"My wife—Charlotte ! She knows nothing about æsthetical philosophy."

"She calls it by another name, but she

understands it well enough to illustrate the principles by example. She tells me that labour and duty are so taken up by you

“In den heitern Regionen
Wo die reinen Formen wohnen,”

that they become joy and beauty—is it so ?”

“I am sure that Charlotte never said any thing half so poetical. But, in plain words, the days pass with me very happily. I should be ungrateful if I were not happy. Heaven has bestowed on me so many sources of love—wife, children, books, and the calling which, when one quits one’s own threshold, carries love along with it into the world beyond. A small world in itself—only a parish—but then my calling links it with infinity.”

“I see ; it is from the sources of love that you draw the supplies for happiness.”

“Surely ; without love one may be good, but one could scarcely be happy. No one can dream of a heaven except as the abode of

love. What writer is it who says, 'How well the human heart was understood by him who first called God by the name of Father'?"

"I do not remember, but it is beautifully said. You evidently do not subscribe to the arguments in Decimus Roach's 'Approach to the Angels.'"

"Ah, Mr Chillingly! your words teach me how lacerated a man's happiness may be if he does not keep the claws of vanity closely pared. I actually feel a keen pang when you speak to me of that eloquent panegyric on celibacy, ignorant that the only thing I ever published which I fancied was not without esteem by intellectual readers is a Reply to 'The Approach to the Angels'—a youthful book, written in the first year of my marriage. But it obtained success: I have just revised the tenth edition of it."

"That is the book I will select from your library. You will be pleased to hear that Mr Roach, whom I saw at Oxford a few days ago, recants his opinions, and, at the

age of fifty, is about to be married—he begs me to add, ‘not for his own personal satisfaction.’”

“Going to be married!—Decimus Roach! I thought my Reply would convince him at last.”

“I shall look to your Reply to remove some lingering doubts in my own mind.”

“Doubts in favour of celibacy?”

“Well, if not for laymen, perhaps for a priesthood.”

“The most forcible part of my Reply is on that head: read it attentively. I think that, of all sections of mankind, the clergy are those to whom, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the community, marriage should be most commended. Why, sir,” continued the vicar, warming up into oratorical enthusiasm, “are you not aware that there are no homes in England from which men who have served and adorned their country have issued forth in such prodigal numbers as those of the clergy of our Church? What other class can produce a

list so crowded with eminent names as we can boast in the sons we have reared and sent forth into the world? How many statesmen, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, physicians, authors, men of science, have been the sons of us village pastors? Naturally—for with us they receive careful education; they acquire of necessity the simple tastes and disciplined habits which lead to industry and perseverance; and, for the most part, they carry with them throughout life a purer moral code, a more systematic reverence for things and thoughts religious associated with their earliest images of affection and respect, than can be expected from the sons of laymen, whose parents are wholly temporal and worldly. Sir, I maintain that this is a cogent argument, to be considered well by the nation, not only in favour of a married clergy—for, on that score, a million of Roaches could not convert public opinion in this country—but in favour of the Church, the Established Church, which has been so fertile a nursery of illustrious laymen; and

I have often thought that one main and undetected cause of the lower tone of morality, public and private, of the greater corruption of manners, of the more prevalent scorn of religion which we see, for instance, in a country so civilised as France, is, that its clergy can train no sons to carry into the contests of earth the steadfast belief in accountability to Heaven."

"I thank you with a full heart," said Kenelm. "I shall ponder well over all that you have so earnestly said. I am already disposed to give up all lingering crotchets as to a bachelor clergy; but, as a layman, I fear that I shall never attain to the purified philanthropy of Mr Decimus Roach, and if ever I do marry, it will be very much for my personal satisfaction."

Mr Emlyn laughed good-humouredly, and, as they had now reached the bridge, shook hands with Kenelm, and walked homewards, along the brook-side and through the burial-ground, with the alert step and the uplifted head of a man who has joy in life and admits of no fear in death.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR the next two weeks or so Kenelm and Lily met, not indeed so often as the reader might suppose, but still frequently; five times at Mrs Braefield's, once again at the Vicarage, and twice when Kenelm had called at Grasmere; and, being invited to stay to tea at one of those visits, he stayed the whole evening. Kenelm was more and more fascinated in proportion as he saw more and more of a creature so exquisitely strange to his experience. She was to him not only a poem, but a poem in the Sibylline Books—enigmatical, perplexing conjecture, and somehow or other mysteriously blending its interest with visions of the future.

Lily was indeed an enchanting combina-

tion of opposites rarely blended into harmony. Her ignorance of much that girls know before they number half her years, was so relieved by candid, innocent simplicity; so adorned by pretty fancies and sweet beliefs; and so contrasted and lit up by gleams of a knowledge that the young ladies we call well educated seldom exhibit—knowledge derived from quick observation of external nature, and impressionable susceptibility to its varying and subtle beauties. This knowledge had been perhaps first instilled, and subsequently nourished, by such poetry as she had not only learned by heart, but taken up as inseparable from the healthful circulation of her thoughts; not the poetry of our own day—most young ladies know enough of that—but selected fragments from the verse of old, most of them from poets now little read by the young of either sex, poets dear to spirits like Coleridge or Charles Lamb. None of them, however, so dear to her as the solemn melodies of Milton. Much of such poetry she had never read in books; it

had been taught her in childhood by her guardian, the painter. And with all this imperfect, desultory culture, there was such dainty refinement in her every look and gesture, and such deep woman-tenderness of heart. Since Kenelm had commended 'Numa Pompilius' to her study, she had taken very lovingly to that old-fashioned romance, and was fond of talking to him about Egeria as of a creature who had really existed.

But what was the effect that he—the first man of years correspondent to her own with whom she had ever familiarly conversed—what was the effect that Kenelm Chillingly produced on the mind and the heart of Lily?

This was, after all, the question that puzzled him the most—not without reason: it might have puzzled the shrewdest bystander. The artless candour with which she manifested her liking to him was at variance with the ordinary character of maiden love; it seemed more the fondness

of a child for a favourite brother. And it was this uncertainty that, in his own thoughts, justified Kenelm for lingering on, and believing that it was necessary to win, or at least to learn more of, her secret heart before he could venture to disclose his own. He did not flatter himself with the pleasing fear that he might be endangering her happiness ; it was only his own that was risked. Then, in all those meetings, all those conversations to themselves, there had passed none of the words which commit our destiny to the will of another. If in the man's eyes love would force its way, Lily's frank, innocent gaze chilled it back again to its inward cell. Joyously as she would spring forward to meet him, there was no tell-tale blush on her cheek, no self-betraying tremor in her clear, sweet-toned voice. No ; there had not yet been a moment when he could say to himself, "She loves me." Often he said to himself, "She knows not yet what love is."

In the intervals of time not passed in

Lily's society, Kenelm would take long rambles with Mr Emlyn, or saunter into Mrs Braefield's drawing-room. For the former he conceived a more cordial sentiment of friendship than he entertained for any man of his own age—a friendship that admitted the noble elements of admiration and respect.

Charles Emlyn was one of those characters in which the colours appear pale unless the light be brought very close to them, and then each tint seems to change into a warmer and richer one. The manner which, at first, you would call merely gentle, becomes unaffectedly genial; the mind you at first might term inert, though well-informed, you now acknowledge to be full of disciplined vigour. Emlyn was not, however, without his little amiable foibles; and it was, perhaps, these that made him lovable. He was a great believer in human goodness, and very easily imposed upon by cunning appeals to "his well-known benevolence." He was disposed to overrate the excellence of all that

he once took to his heart. He thought he had the best wife in the world, the best children, the best servants, the best beehive, the best pony, and the best house-dog. His parish was the most virtuous, his church the most picturesque, his vicarage the prettiest, certainly, in the whole shire—perhaps, in the whole kingdom. Probably it was this philosophy of optimism which contributed to lift him into the serene realm of æsthetic joy.

He was not without his dislikes as well as likings. Though a liberal Churchman towards Protestant dissenters, he cherished the *odium theologicum* for all that savoured of Popery. Perhaps there was another cause for this besides the purely theological one. Early in life a young sister of his had been, to use his phrase, “secretly entrapped” into conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, and had since entered a convent. His affections had been deeply wounded by this loss to the range of them. Mr Emlyn had also his little infirmities of self-esteem, rather than

of vanity. Though he had seen very little of any world beyond that of his parish, he piqued himself on his knowledge of human nature and of practical affairs in general. Certainly no man had read more about them, especially in the books of the ancient classics. Perhaps it was owing to this that he so little understood Lily—a character to which the ancient classics afforded no counterpart nor clue; and perhaps it was this also that made Lily think him “so terribly grown up.” Thus, despite his mild good nature, she did not get on very well with him.

The society of this amiable scholar pleased Kenelm the more, because the scholar evidently had not the remotest idea that Kenelm’s sojourn at Cromwell Lodge was influenced by the vicinity to Grasmere. Mr Emlyn was sure that he knew human nature, and practical affairs in general, too well to suppose that the heir to a rich baronet could dream of taking for wife a girl without fortune or rank, the orphan ward of a low-born artist only just struggling into reputation; or,

indeed, that a Cambridge prizeman, who had evidently read much on grave and dry subjects, and who had no less evidently seen a great deal of polished society, could find any other attraction in a very imperfectly educated girl, who tamed butterflies and knew no more than they did of fashionable life, than Mr Emlyn himself felt in the presence of a pretty wayward innocent child—the companion and friend of his Clemmy.

Mrs Braefield was more discerning ; but she had a good deal of tact, and did not as yet scare Kenelm away from her house by letting him see how much she had discerned. She would not even tell her husband, who, absent from the place on most mornings, was too absorbed in the cares of his own business to interest himself much in the affairs of others.

Now Elsie, being still of a romantic turn of mind, had taken it into her head that Lily Mordaunt, if not actually the princess to be found in poetic dramas whose rank was for awhile kept concealed, was yet one of the

higher-born daughters of the ancient race whose name she bore, and in that respect no derogatory alliance for Kenelm Chillingly. A conclusion she had arrived at from no better evidence than the well-bred appearance and manners of the aunt, and the exquisite delicacy of the niece's form and features, with the undefinable air of distinction which accompanied even her most careless and sportive moments. But Mrs Braefield also had the wit to discover that under the infantine ways and phantasies of this almost self-taught girl, there lay, as yet undeveloped, the elements of a beautiful womanhood. So that altogether, from the very day she first re-encountered Kenelm, Elsie's thought had been that Lily was the wife to suit him. Once conceiving that idea, her natural strength of will made her resolve on giving all facilities to carry it out silently and unobtrusively, and therefore skilfully.

"I am so glad to think," she said one day, when Kenelm had joined her walk through the pleasant shrubberies in her

garden ground, "that you have made such friends with Mr Emlyn. Though all hereabouts like him so much for his goodness, there are few who can appreciate his learning. To you it must be a surprise as well as pleasure to find, in this quiet humdrum place, a companion so clever and well-informed; it compensates for your disappointment in discovering that our brook yields such bad sport."

"Don't disparage the brook; it yields the pleasantest banks on which to lie down under old pollard oaks at noon, or over which to saunter at morn and eve. Where those charms are absent even a salmon could not please. Yes; I rejoice to have made friends with Mr Emlyn. I have learned a great deal from him, and am often asking myself whether I shall ever make peace with my conscience by putting what I have learned into practice."

"May I ask what special branch of learning is that?"

"I scarcely know how to define it. Sup-

pose we call it 'Worth-whileism.' Among the New Ideas which I was recommended to study as those that must govern my generation, the Not-worth-while Idea holds a very high rank ; and being myself naturally of calm and equable constitution, that new idea made the basis of my philosophical system. But since I have become intimate with Charles Emlyn I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of Worth-whileism, old idea though it be. I see a man who, with very commonplace materials for interest or amusement at his command, continues to be always interested or generally amused ; I ask myself why and how ? And it seems to me as if the cause started from fixed beliefs which settle his relations with God and man, and that settlement he will not allow any speculations to disturb. Be those beliefs questionable or not by others, at least they are such as cannot displease a Deity, and cannot fail to be kindly and useful to fellow mortals. Then he plants these beliefs on the soil of a happy and genial home, which

tends to confirm and strengthen and call them into daily practice ; and when he goes forth from home, even to the farthest verge of the circle that surrounds it, he carries with him the home influences of kindness and use. Possibly my line of life may be drawn to the verge of a wider circle than his ; but so much the better for interest and amusement, if it can be drawn from the same centre ; namely, fixed beliefs daily warmed into vital action in the sunshine of a congenial home."

Mrs Braefield listened to this speech with pleased attention, and as it came to its close, the name of Lily trembled on her tongue, for she divined that when he spoke of home Lily was in his thoughts ; but she checked the impulse, and replied by a generalised platitude.

"Certainly the first thing in life is to secure a happy and congenial home. It must be a terrible trial for the best of us if we marry without love."

"Terrible, indeed, if the one loves and the other does not."

“That can scarcely be your case, Mr Chillingly, for I am sure you could not marry where you did not love ; and do not think I flatter you when I say that a man far less gifted than you can scarcely fail to be loved by the woman he woos and wins.”

Kenelm, in this respect one of the modestest of human beings, shook his head doubtingly, and was about to reply in self-disparagement, when, lifting his eyes and looking round, he halted mute and still as if rooted to the spot. They had entered the trellised circle through the roses of which he had first caught sight of the young face that had haunted him ever since.

“Ah !” he said abruptly ; “I cannot stay longer here, dreaming away the work-day hours in a fairy ring. I am going to town to-day by the next train.”

“You are coming back ?”

“Of course — this evening.” I left no address at my lodgings in London. There must be a large accumulation of letters — some, no doubt, from my father and mother.

I am only going for them. Good-bye. How kindly you have listened to me!"

"Shall we fix a day next week for seeing the remains of the old Roman villa? I will ask Mrs Cameron and her niece to be of the party."

"Any day you please," said Kenelm joyfully.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM did indeed find a huge pile of letters and notes on reaching his forsaken apartment in Mayfair—many of them merely invitations for days long past, none of them of interest except two from Sir Peter, three from his mother, and one from Tom Bowles.

Sir Peter's were short. In the first he gently scolded Kenelm for going away without communicating any address; and stated the acquaintance he had formed with Gordon, the favourable impression that young gentleman had made on him, the transfer of the £20,000, and the invitation given to Gordon, the Traverses, and Lady Glenalvon. The second, dated much later, noted the arrival of his invited guests, dwelt with warmth

unusual to Sir Peter on the attractions of Cecilia, and took occasion to refer, not the less emphatically because as it were incidentally, to the sacred promise which Kenelm had given him never to propose to a young lady until the case had been submitted to the examination and received the consent of Sir Peter. "Come to Exmundham, and if I do not give my consent to propose to Cecilia Travers, hold me a tyrant and rebel."

Lady Chillingly's letters were much longer. They dwelt more complainingly on his persistence in eccentric habits—so exceedingly unlike other people, quitting London at the very height of the season, going without even a servant nobody knew where—she did not wish to wound his feelings; but still those were not the ways natural to a young gentleman of station. If he had no respect for himself he ought to have some consideration for his parents, especially his poor mother. She then proceeded to comment on the elegant manners of Leopold Travers,

and the good sense and pleasant conversation of Chillingly Gordon, a young man of whom any mother might be proud. From that subject she diverged to mildly querulous references to family matters. Parson John had expressed himself very rudely to Mr Chillingly Gordon upon some book by a foreigner—Comte, or Count, or some such name—in which, so far as she could pretend to judge, Mr. Gordon had uttered some very benevolent sentiments about humanity, which, in the most insolent manner, Parson John had denounced as an attack on religion. But really Parson John was too High Church for her. Having thus disposed of Parson John, she indulged some ladylike wailings on the singular costume of the three Miss Chillinglys. They had been asked by Sir Peter, unknown to her—so like him—to meet their guests; to meet Lady Glenalvon and Miss Travers, whose dress was so perfect (here she described their dress)—and they came in pea-green with pelerines of mock blonde, and Miss Sally with corkscrew ring-

lets and a wreath of jessamine, "which no girl after eighteen would venture to wear."

"But, my dear," added her ladyship, "your poor father's family are certainly great oddities. I have more to put up with than any one knows. I do my best to carry it off. I know my duties, and will do them."

Family grievances thus duly recorded and lamented, Lady Chillingly returned to her guests.

Evidently unconscious of her husband's designs on Cecilia, she dismissed her briefly : "A very handsome young lady, though rather too blonde for her taste, and certainly with an air *distingué*." Lastly, she enlarged on the extreme pleasure she felt on meeting again *the* friend of her youth, Lady Glenalvon.

"Not at all spoilt by the education of the great world, which, alas! obedient to the duties of wife and mother, however little my sacrifices are appreciated, I have long since relinquished. Lady Glenalvon sug-

gests turning that hideous old moat into a fernery—a great improvement. Of course your poor father makes objections.”

Tom’s letter was written on blackedged paper, and ran thus:—

“DEAR SIR,—Since I had the honour to see you in London I have had a sad loss—my poor uncle is no more. He died very suddenly after a hearty supper. One doctor says it was apoplexy, another valvular disease of the heart. He has left me his heir, after providing for his sister—no one had an idea that he had saved so much money. I am quite a rich man now. And I shall leave the veterinary business, which of late—since I took to reading, as you kindly advised—is not much to my liking. The principal corn-merchant here has offered to take me into partnership; and, from what I can see, it will be a very good thing, and a great rise in life. But, sir, I can’t settle to it at present—I can’t settle, as I would wish, to

anything. I know you will not laugh at me when I say I have a strange longing to travel for awhile. I have been reading books of travels, and they get into my head more than any other books. But I don't think I could leave the country with a contented heart, till I have had just another look at you know whom—just to see her, and know she is happy. I am sure I could shake hands with Will, and kiss her little one without a wrong thought. What do you say to that, dear sir? You promised to write to me about Her. But I have not heard from you. Susy, the little girl with the flowerball, has had a loss too—the poor old man she lived with died within a few days of my dear uncle's decease. Mother moved here, as I think you know, when the forge at Graveleigh was sold; and she is going to take Susy to live with her. She is quite fond of Susy. Pray let me hear from you soon, and do, dear sir, give me your advice about travelling—and about

Her. You see I should like Her to think of me more kindly when I am in distant parts.

“ I remain, dear sir,

“ Your grateful servant,

“ T. BOWLES.

“ P.S.—Miss Travers has sent me Will's last remittance. There is very little owed me now; so they must be thriving. I hope She is not overworked.”

On returning by the train that evening Kenelm went to the house of Will Somers. The shop was already closed, but he was admitted by a trusty servant-maid to the parlour, where he found them all at supper, except indeed the baby, who had long since retired to the cradle, and the cradle had been removed upstairs. Will and Jessie were very proud when Kenelm invited himself to share their repast, which, though simple, was by no means a bad one. When the meal was over and the supper things re-

moved, Kenelm drew his chair near to the glass door which led into a little garden very neatly kept—for it was Will's pride to attend to it—before he sat down to his more professional work. The door was open, and admitted the coolness of the starlit air and the fragrance of the sleeping flowers.

“You have a pleasant home here, Mrs Somers.”

“We have, indeed, and know how to bless him we owe it to.”

“I am rejoiced to think that. How often when God designs a special kindness to us He puts the kindness into the heart of a fellow-man—perhaps the last fellow-man we should have thought of; but in blessing him we thank God who inspired him. Now, my dear friends, I know that you all three suspect me of being the agent whom God chose for His benefits. You fancy that it was from me came the loan which enabled you to leave Graveleigh and settle here. You are mistaken—you look incredulous.”

“It could not be the Squire,” exclaimed

Jessie. "Miss Travers assured me that it was neither he nor herself. Oh, it must be you, sir. I beg pardon, but who else could it be?"

"Your husband shall guess. Suppose, Will, that you had behaved ill to some one who was nevertheless dear to you, and on thinking over it afterwards felt very sorry and much ashamed of yourself, and suppose that later you had the opportunity and the power to render a service to that person, do you think you would do it?"

"I should be a bad man if I did not."

"Bravo! And supposing that when the person you thus served came to know it was you who rendered the service, he did not feel thankful, he did not think it handsome of you, thus to repair any little harm he might have done you before, but became churlish, and sore, and cross-grained, and with a wretched false pride said that because he had offended you once he resented your taking the liberty of befriending him now, would not you think that person an ungrateful fellow—ungrateful not only to you

his fellow-man—that is of less moment—but ungrateful to the God who put it into your heart to be His human agent in the benefit received?”

“Well, sir, yes, certainly,” said Will, with all the superior refinement of his intellect to that of Jessie, unaware of what Kenelm was driving at; while Jessie, pressing her hands tightly together, turning pale, and with a frightened hurried glance towards Will’s face, answered impulsively:

“Oh, Mr Chillingly, I hope you are not thinking, not speaking of Mr Bowles?”

“Whom else should I think, or speak of?”

Will rose nervously from his chair, all his features writhing.

“Sir, sir, this is a bitter blow—very bitter, very.”

Jessie rushed to Will, flung her arms round him, and sobbed.

Kenelm turned quietly to old Mrs Somers, who had suspended the work on which since supper she had been employed, knitting socks for the baby,

“My dear Mrs Somers, what is the good of being a grandmother and knitting socks for baby grandchildren, if you cannot assure those silly children of yours that they are too happy in each other to harbour any resentment against a man who would have parted them, and now repents?”

Somewhat to Kenelm's admiration, I dare not say surprise, old Mrs Somers, thus appealed to, rose from her seat, and, with a dignity of thought or of feeling no one could have anticipated from the quiet peasant woman, approached the wedded pair, lifted Jessie's face with one hand, laid the other on Will's head, and said, “If you don't long to see Mr Bowles again and say ‘the Lord bless you, sir!’ you don't deserve the Lord's blessing upon you.” Therewith she went back to her seat, and resumed her knitting.

“Thank Heaven, we have paid back the best part of the loan,” said Will, in very agitated tones, “and I think, with a little pinching, Jessie, and with selling off some of the stock, we might pay the rest; and

then"—and then he turned to Kenelm—"and then, sir, we will" (here a gulp) "thank Mr Bowles."

"This don't satisfy me at all, Will," answered Kenelm; "and since I helped to bring you two together, I claim the right to say I would never have done so could I have guessed you could have trusted your wife so little as to allow a remembrance of Mr Bowles to be a thought of pain. You did not feel humiliated when you imagined that it was to me you owed some moneys which you have been honestly paying off. Well, then, I will lend you whatever trifle remains to discharge your whole debts to Mr Bowles, so that you may sooner be able to say to him, 'Thank you.' But between you and me, Will, I think you will be a finer fellow and a manlier fellow if you decline to borrow that trifle of me; if you feel you would rather say 'Thank you' to Mr Bowles, without the silly notion that when you have paid him his money you owe him nothing for his kindness."

Will looked away, irresolutely. Kenelm went on: "I have received a letter from Mr Bowles to-day. He has come into a fortune, and thinks of going abroad for a time; but before he goes, he says he should like to shake hands with Will, and be assured by Jessie that all his old rudeness is forgiven. He had no notion that I should blab about the loan; he wished that to remain always a secret. But between friends there need be no secrets. What say you, Will? As head of this household, shall Mr Bowles be welcomed here as a friend or not?"

"Kindly welcome," said old Mrs Somers, looking up from the socks.

"Sir," said Will, with sudden energy, "look here; you have never been in love, I dare say. If you had, you would not be so hard on me. Mr Bowles was in love with my wife there. Mr Bowles is a very fine man, and I am a cripple."

"Oh, Will! Will!" cried Jessie.

"But I trust my wife with my whole heart and soul; and, now that the first pang

is over, Mr Bowles shall be, as mother says, kindly welcome—heartily welcome.”

“Shake hands. Now you speak like a man, Will. I hope to bring Bowles here to supper before many days are over.”

And that night Kenelm wrote to Mr Bowles :

“MY DEAR TOM,—Come and spend a few days with me at Cromwell Lodge, Moleswick. Mr and Mrs Somers wish much to see and to thank you. I could not remain for ever degraded in order to gratify your whim. They would have it that I bought their shop, &c., and I was forced in self-defence to say who it was. More on this and on travels when you come.

“Your true friend,

“K. C.”

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS CAMERON was seated alone in her pretty drawing-room, with a book lying open, but unheeded, on her lap. She was looking away from its pages, seemingly into the garden without, but rather into empty space.

To a very acute and practised observer, there was in her countenance an expression which baffled the common eye.

To the common eye it was simply vacant; the expression of a quiet, humdrum woman, who might have been thinking of some quiet humdrum household detail—found that too much for her, and was now not thinking at all.

But to the true observer, there were in that face indications of a troubled past, still haunted with ghosts never to be laid at rest;

indications too of a character in herself that had undergone some revolutionary change ; it had not always been the character of a woman quiet and humdrum. The delicate outlines of the lip and nostril evinced sensibility, and the deep and downward curve of it bespoke habitual sadness. The softness of the look into space did not tell of a vacant mind, but rather of a mind subdued and over-burthened by the weight of a secret sorrow. There was also about her whole presence, in the very quiet which made her prevalent external characteristic, the evidence of manners formed in a high-bred society—the society in which quiet is connected with dignity and grace. The poor understood this better than her rich acquaintances at Moleswick, when they said, “ Mrs Cameron was every inch a lady.” To judge by her features she must once have been pretty, not a showy prettiness, but decidedly pretty. Now, as the features were small, all prettiness had faded away in cold grey colourings, and a sort of tamed and slumbering timidity of aspect. She was not

only not demonstrative, but must have imposed on herself as a duty the suppression of demonstration. Who could look at the formation of those lips, and not see that they belonged to the nervous, quick, demonstrative temperament? And yet, observing her again more closely, that suppression of the constitutional tendency to candid betrayal of emotion, would the more enlist your curiosity or interest; because, if physiognomy and phrenology have any truth in them, there was little strength in her character. In the womanly yieldingness of the short curved upper lip, the pleading timidity of the *regard*, the disproportionate but elegant slenderness of the head between the ear and the neck, there were the tokens of one who cannot resist the will, perhaps the whim, of another whom she either loves or trusts.

The book open on her lap is a serious book on the doctrine of grace, written by a popular clergyman of what is termed "the Low Church." She seldom read any but serious books, except where such care as she

gave to Lily's education compelled her to read 'Outlines of History and Geography,' or the elementary French books used in seminaries for young ladies. Yet if any one had decoyed Mrs Cameron into familiar conversation, he would have discovered that she must early have received the education given to young ladies of station. She could speak and write French and Italian as a native. She had read, and still remembered, such classic authors in either language as are conceded to the use of pupils by the well-regulated taste of orthodox governesses. She had a knowledge of botany, such as botany was taught twenty years ago. I am not sure that, if her memory had been fairly aroused, she might not have come out strong in divinity and political economy, as expounded by the popular manuals of Mrs Marcet. In short, you could see in her a thoroughbred English lady, who had been taught in a generation before Lily's, and immeasurably superior in culture to the ordinary run of English young ladies taught nowadays. So,

in what after all are very minor accomplishments—now made major accomplishments—such as music, it was impossible that a connoisseur should hear her play on the piano without remarking, “That woman has had the best masters of her time.” She could only play pieces that belonged to her generation. She had learned nothing since. In short, the whole intellectual culture had come to a dead stop long years ago, perhaps before Lily was born.

Now, while she is gazing into space, Mrs Braefield is announced. Mrs Cameron does not start from reverie. She never starts. But she makes a weary movement of annoyance, resettles herself, and lays the serious book on the sofa table. Elsie enters, young, radiant, dressed in all the perfection of the fashion, that is, as ungracefully as in the eyes of an artist any gentlewoman can be; but rich merchants who are proud of their wives so insist, and their wives, in that respect, submissively obey them.

The ladies interchange customary saluta-

tions, enter into the customary preliminaries of talk, and, after a pause, Elsie begins in earnest.

“But shan’t I see Lily? Where is she?”

“I fear she is gone into the town. A poor little boy, who did our errands, has met with an accident—fallen from a cherry-tree.”

“Which he was robbing?”

“Probably.”

“And Lily has gone to lecture him?”

“I don’t know as to that; but he is much hurt, and Lily has gone to see what is the matter with him.”

Mrs Braefield, in her frank outspoken way:

“I don’t take much to girls of Lily’s age in general, though I am passionately fond of children. You know how I do take to Lily; perhaps, because she is so like a child. But she must be an anxious charge to you.”

Mrs Cameron replied by an anxious “No. She is still a child, a very good one; why should I be anxious?”

Mrs Braefield, impulsively:

“Why, your child must now be eighteen.”

Mrs Cameron :

“Eighteen—is it possible ! How time flies ! though in a life so monotonous as mine, time does not seem to fly, it slips on like the lapse of water. Let me think—eighteen ? No, she is but seventeen—seventeen last May.”

Mrs Braefield : “Seventeen ! A very anxious age for a girl ; an age in which dolls cease and lovers begin.”

Mrs Cameron, not so languidly, but still quietly :

“Lily never cared much for dolls—never much for lifeless pets ; and as to lovers, she does not dream of them.”

Mrs Braefield, briskly :

“There is no age after six in which girls do not dream of lovers. And here another question arises. When a girl so lovely as Lily is eighteen next birthday, may not a lover dream of her ?”

Mrs Cameron, with that wintry cold tranquillity of manner, which implies that in putting such questions an interrogator is taking a liberty :

"As no lover has appeared, I cannot trouble myself about his dreams."

Said Elsie, inly to herself, "This is the stupidest woman I ever met!" and aloud to Mrs Cameron:

"Do you not think that your neighbour, Mr Chillingly, is a very fine young man?"

"I suppose he would be generally considered so. He is very tall."

"A handsome face?"

"Handsome, is it? I dare say."

"What does Lily say?"

"About what?"

"About Mr Chillingly. Does she not think him handsome?"

"I never asked her."

"My dear Mrs Cameron, would it not be a very pretty match for Lily? The Chillinglys are among the oldest families in 'Burke's Landed Gentry,' and I believe his father, Sir Peter, has a considerable property."

For the first time in this conversation Mrs Cameron betrayed emotion. A sudden

flush overspread her countenance, and then left it paler than before. After a pause she recovered her accustomed composure, and replied rudely—

“It would be no friend to Lily who could put such notions into her head; and there is no reason to suppose that they have entered into Mr Chillingly’s.”

“Would you be sorry if they did? Surely you would like your niece to marry well, and there are few chances of her doing so at Moleswick.”

“Pardon me, Mrs Braefield, but the question of Lily’s marriage I have never discussed, even with her guardian. Nor, considering the childlike nature of her tastes and habits, rather than the years she has numbered, can I think the time has yet come for discussing it at all.”

Elsie, thus rebuked, changed the subject to some newspaper topic which interested the public mind at the moment, and very soon rose to depart. Mrs Cameron detained the hand that her visitor held out, and said

in low tones, which, though embarrassed, were evidently earnest, "My dear Mrs Braefield, let me trust to your good sense and the affection with which you have honoured my niece, not to incur the risk of unsettling her mind by a hint of the ambitious projects for her future on which you have spoken to me. It is extremely improbable that a young man of Mr Chillingly's expectations would entertain any serious thoughts of marrying out of his own sphere of life, and——"

"Stop, Mrs Cameron. I must interrupt you. Lily's personal attractions and grace of manner would adorn any station; and have I not rightly understood you to say that though her guardian, Mr Melville, is, as we all know, a man who has risen above the rank of his parents, your niece, Miss Mordaunt, is like yourself, by birth a gentlewoman."

"Yes, by birth a gentlewoman," said Mrs Cameron, raising her head with a sudden pride. But she added, with as

sudden a change to a sort of freezing humility, "what does that matter? A girl without fortune, without connection, brought up in this little cottage, the ward of a professional artist, who was the son of a city clerk, to whom she owes even the home she has found, is not in the same sphere of life as Mr Chillingly, and his parents could not approve of such an alliance for him. It would be most cruel to her, if you were to change the innocent pleasure she may take in the conversation of a clever and well-informed stranger, into the troubled interest which, since you remind me of her age, a girl even so childlike and beautiful as Lily might conceive in one represented to her as the possible partner of her life. Don't commit that cruelty; don't—don't, I implore you!"

"Trust me," cried the warm-hearted Elsie, with tears rushing to her eyes. "What you say so sensibly, so nobly, never struck me before. I do not know much of the world—knew nothing of it till I married—and being

very fond of Lily, and having a strong regard for Mr Chillingly, I fancied I could not serve both better than—than—but I see now; he is very young, very peculiar; his parents might object, not to Lily herself, but to the circumstances you name. And you would not wish her to enter any family where she was not as cordially welcomed as she deserves to be. I am glad to have had this talk with you. Happily, I have done no mischief as yet. I will do none. I had come to propose an excursion to the remains of the Roman Villa, some miles off, and to invite you and Mr Chillingly. I will no longer try to bring him and Lily together.”

“Thank you. But you still misconstrue me. I do not think that Lily cares half so much for Mr Chillingly as she does for a new butterfly. I do not fear their coming together, as you call it, in the light in which she now regards him, and in which, from all I observe, he regards her. My only fear is that a hint might lead her to regard him in another way, and that way impossible.”

Elsie left the house, extremely bewildered, and with a profound contempt for Mrs Cameron's knowledge of what may happen to two young persons "brought together."

CHAPTER XVII.

Now, on that very day, and about the same hour in which the conversation just recorded between Elsie and Mrs Cameron took place, Kenelm, in his solitary noonday wanderings, entered the burial-ground in which Lily had, some short time before, surprised him. And there he found her, standing beside the flower border which she had placed round the grave of the child whom she had tended and nursed in vain.

The day was clouded and sunless; one of those days that so often instil a sentiment of melancholy into the heart of an English summer.

"You come here too often, Miss Mor-daunt," said Kenelm very softly, as he approached.

Lily turned her face to him, without any start of surprise, with no brightening change in its pensive expression—an expression rare to the mobile play of her features.

“Not too often. I promised to come as often as I could; and, as I told you before, I have never broken a promise yet.”

Kenelm made no answer. Presently the girl turned from the spot, and Kenelm followed her silently till she halted before the old tombstone with its effaced inscription.

“See,” she said with a faint smile, “I have put fresh flowers there. Since the day we met in this churchyard, I have thought much of that tomb, so neglected, so forgotten, and—” she paused a moment, and went on abruptly,—“do you not often find that you are much too—what is the word? ah! too egotistical, considering, and pondering, and dreaming greatly too much about yourself?”

“Yes, you are right there; though, till you so accused me, my conscience did not detect it.”

“And don't you find that you escape from being so haunted by the thought of yourself, when you think of the dead? they can never have any share in your existence *here*. When you say, ‘I shall do this or that to-day;’ when you dream, ‘I may be this or that to-morrow,’ you are thinking and dreaming, all by yourself, for yourself. But you are out of yourself, beyond yourself, when you think and dream of the dead, who can have nothing to do with your to-day or your to-morrow.”

As we all know, Kenelm Chillingly made it one of the rules of his life never to be taken by surprise. But when the speech I have written down came from the lips of that tamer of butterflies, he was so startled that all it occurred to him to say, after a long pause, was,

“The dead are the past; and with the past rests all in the present or the future that can take us out of our natural selves. The past decides our present. By the past we divine our future. History, poetry, science,

the welfare of states, the advancement of individuals, are all connected with tombstones of which inscriptions are effaced. You are right to honour the mouldered tombstones with fresh flowers. It is only in the companionship of the dead that one ceases to be an egotist."

If the imperfectly educated Lily had been above the quick comprehension of the academical Kenelm in her speech, so Kenelm was now above the comprehension of Lily. She too paused before she replied,

"If I knew you better, I think I could understand you better. I wish you knew Lion. I should like to hear you talk with him."

While thus conversing, they had left the burial-ground, and were in the pathway trodden by the common wayfarer.

Lily resumed.

"Yes, I should so like to hear you talk with Lion."

"You mean your guardian, Mr Melville."

"Yes, you know that."

“And why should you like to hear me talk to him?”

“Because there are some things in which I doubt if he was altogether right, and I would ask you to express my doubts to him; you would, would not you?”

“But why can you not express them yourself to your guardian; are you afraid of him?”

“Afraid, no indeed! But—ah, how many people there are coming this way! There is some tiresome public meeting in the town to-day. Let us take the ferry, the other side of the stream is much pleasanter, we shall have it more to ourselves.”

Turning aside to the right while she thus spoke, Lily descended a gradual slope to the margin of the stream, on which they found an old man dozily reclined in his ferry-boat.

As, seated side by side, they were slowly borne over the still waters under a sunless sky, Kenelm would have renewed the subject which his companion had begun, but she shook her head, with a significant glance

at the ferryman. Evidently what she had to say was too confidential to admit of a listener, not that the old ferryman seemed likely to take the trouble of listening to any talk that was not addressed to him. Lily soon did address her talk to him—"So, Brown, the cow has quite recovered."

"Yes, Miss, thanks to you, and God bless you. To think of your beating the old witch like that!"

"'Tis not I who beat the witch, Brown; 'tis the fairy. Fairies, you know, are much more powerful than witches."

"So I find, Miss."

Lily here turned to Kenelm, "Mr Brown has a very nice milch cow that was suddenly taken very ill, and both he and his wife were convinced that the cow was bewitched."

"Of course it were, that stands to reason. Did not Mother Wright tell my old woman that she would repent of selling milk, and abuse her dreadful; and was not the cow taken with shivers that very night?"

"Gently, Brown. Mother Wright did not

say that your wife would repent of selling milk, but of putting water into it."

"And how did she know that, if she was not a witch? We have the best of customers among the gentlefolks, and never an one that complained."

"And," answered Lily to Kenelm, unheeding this last observation, which was made in a sullen manner, "Brown had a horrid notion of enticing Mother Wright into his ferry-boat, and throwing her into the water, in order to break the spell upon the cow. But I consulted the fairies, and gave him a fairy charm to tie round the cow's neck. And the cow is quite well now, you see. So, Brown, there was no necessity to throw Mother Wright into the water, because she said you put some of it into the milk. But," she added, as the boat now touched the opposite bank, "shall I tell you, Brown, what the fairies said to me this morning?"

"Do, Miss."

"It was this: If Brown's cow yields

milk without any water in it, and if water gets into it when the milk is sold, we, the fairies, will pinch Mr Brown black and blue; and when Brown has his next fit of rheumatics he must not look to the fairies to charm it away."

Herewith Lily dropped a silver groat into Brown's hand, and sprang lightly ashore, followed by Kenelm.

"You have quite converted him, not only as to the existence, but as to the beneficial power of fairies," said Kenelm.

"Ah," answered Lily very gravely, "Ah, but would it not be nice if there were fairies still? good fairies, and one could get at them? tell them all that troubles and puzzles us, and win from them charms against the witchcraft we practise on ourselves?"

"I doubt if it would be good for us to rely on such supernatural counsellors. Our own souls are so boundless, that the more we explore them the more we shall find worlds spreading upon worlds into infinities;

and among the worlds is Fairyland." He added, inly to himself, "Am I not in Fairyland now?"

"Hush!" whispered Lily. "Don't speak more yet awhile. I am thinking over what you have just said, and trying to understand it."

Thus, walking silently, they gained the little summer-house which tradition dedicated to the memory of Izaak Walton.

Lily entered it and seated herself, Kenelm took his place beside her. It was a small octagon building which, judging by its architecture, might have been built in the troubled reign of Charles I.; the walls plastered within were thickly covered with names, and dates, and inscriptions, in praise of angling, in tribute to Izaak, or with quotations from his books. On the opposite side they could see the lawn of Grasmere, with its great willows dipping into the water. The stillness of the place, with its associations of the angler's still life, were in

harmony with the quiet day, its breezeless air, and cloud-vested sky.

“You were to tell me your doubts in connection with your guardian, doubts if he were right in something which you left unexplained, which you could not yourself explain to him.”

Lily started as from thoughts alien to the subject thus reintroduced. “Yes, I cannot mention my doubts to him because they relate to me, and he is so good. I owe him so much that I could not bear to vex him by a word that might seem like reproach or complaint. You remember,” here she drew nearer to him; and, with that ingenuous confiding look and movement which had, not unfrequently, enraptured him at the moment, and saddened him on reflection—too ingenuous, too confiding, for the sentiment with which he yearned to inspire her—she turned towards him her frank untimorous eyes, and laid her hand on his arm: “You remember that I said in the burial-ground

how much I felt that one is constantly thinking too much of oneself. That must be wrong. In talking to you only about myself I know I am wrong, but I cannot help it, I must do so. Do not think ill of me for it. You see I have not been brought up like other girls. Was my guardian right in that? Perhaps if he had insisted upon not letting me have my own wilful way, if he had made me read the books which Mr and Mrs Emlyn wanted to force on me, instead of the poems and fairy tales which he gave me, I should have had so much more to think of that I should have thought less of myself. You said that the dead were the past; one forgets oneself when one thinks of the dead. If I had read more of the past, had more subjects of interest in the dead whose history it tells, surely I should be less shut up, as it were, in my own small, selfish heart? It is only very lately I have thought of this, only very lately that I have felt sorrow and shame

in the thought that I am so ignorant of what other girls know, even little Clemmy. And I dare not say this to Lion when I see him next, lest he should blame himself, when he only meant to be kind, and used to say, 'I don't want Fairy to be learned, it is enough for me to think she is happy.' And oh, I was so happy, till—till of late!"

"Because till of late you only knew yourself as a child. But, now that you feel the desire of knowledge, childhood is vanishing. Do not vex yourself. With the mind which nature has bestowed on you, such learning as may fit you to converse with those dreaded 'grown-up folks' will come to you very easily and quickly. You will acquire more in a month now than you would have acquired in a year when you were a child, and task-work was loathed, not courted. Your aunt is evidently well instructed, and if I might venture to talk to her about the choice of books—"

"No, don't do that. Lion would not like it."

"Your guardian would not like you to have the education common to other young ladies?"

"Lion forbade my aunt to teach me much that I rather wished to learn. She wanted to do so, but she has given it up at his wish. She only now teases me with those horrid French verbs, and that I know is a mere make-belief. Of course on Sunday it is different, then I must not read anything but the Bible and sermons. I don't care so much for the sermons as I ought, but I could read the Bible all day, every week-day as well as Sunday; and it is from the Bible that I learn that I ought to think less about myself."

Kenelm involuntarily pressed the little hand that lay so innocently on his arm.

"Do you know the difference between one kind of poetry and another?" asked Lily abruptly.

"I am not sure. I ought to know when one kind is good and another kind is bad.

But in that respect I find many people, especially professed critics, who prefer the poetry which I call bad to the poetry I think good."

"The difference between one kind of poetry and another, supposing them both to be good," said Lily positively, and with an air of triumph, "is this—I know, for Lion explained it to me. In one kind of poetry the writer throws himself entirely out of his existence, he puts himself into other existences quite strange to his own. He may be a very good man, and he writes his best poetry about very wicked men; he would not hurt a fly, but he delights in describing murderers. But in the other kind of poetry the writer does not put himself into other existences, he expresses his own joys and sorrows, his own individual heart and mind. If he could not hurt a fly, he certainly could not make himself at home in the cruel heart of a murderer. There, Mr Chillingly, that is the differ-

ence between one kind of poetry and another."

"Very true," said Kenelm, amused by the girl's critical definitions. "The difference between dramatic poetry and lyrical. But may I ask what that definition has to do with the subject into which you so suddenly introduced it?"

"Much—for when Lion was explaining this to my aunt, he said, 'A perfect woman is a poem; but she can never be a poem of the one kind, never can make herself at home in the hearts with which she has no connection, never feel any sympathy with crime and evil; she must be a poem of the other kind, weaving out poetry from her own thoughts and fancies.' And turning to me, he said, smiling, 'That is the poem I wish Lily to be. Too many dry books would only spoil the poem.' And you now see why I am so ignorant, and so unlike other girls, and why Mr and Mrs Emlyn look down upon me"

"You wrong at least Mr Emlyn, for it was he who first said to me, 'Lily Mordaunt is a poem.'"

"Did he? I shall love him for that. How pleased Lion will be!"

"Mr Melville seems to have an extraordinary influence over your mind," said Kenelm with a jealous pang.

"Of course. I have neither father nor mother, Lion has been both to me. Aunty has often said, 'You cannot be too grateful to your guardian; without him I should have no home to shelter you, no bread to give you.' *He* never said that—he would be very angry with aunty if he knew she had said it. When he does not call me Fairy he calls me Princess. I would not displease him for the world."

"He is very much older than you, old enough to be your father, I hear."

"I dare say. But if he were twice as old I could not love him better."

Kenelm smiled—the jealousy was gone.

Certainly not thus could any girl, even Lily, speak of one with whom, however she might love him, she was likely to fall in love.

Lily now rose up, rather slowly and wearily. "It is time to go home, aunty will be wondering what keeps me away—come."

They took their way towards the bridge opposite to Cromwell Lodge.

It was not for some minutes that either broke silence. Lily was the first to do so, and with one of those abrupt changes of topic which were common to the restless play of her secret thoughts.

"You have father and mother still living," Mr Chillingly.

"Thank Heaven, yes."

"Which do you love the best?"

"That is scarcely a fair question. I love my mother very much; but my father and I understand each other better than——"

"I see—it is so difficult to be understood. No one understands me."

"I think I do."

Lily shook her head, with an energetic movement of dissent.

"At least as well as a man can understand a young lady."

"What sort of young lady is Miss Cecilia Travers?"

"Cecilia Travers? When and how did you ever hear that such a person existed?"

"That big London man whom they called Sir Thomas mentioned her name the day we dined at Braefieldville."

"I remember—as having been at the Court ball."

"He said she was very handsome."

"So she is."

"Is she a poem, too?"

"No; that never struck me."

"Mr Emlyn, I suppose, would call her perfectly brought up—well educated. He would not raise his eyebrows at her as he does at me, poor me, Cinderella!"

"Ah, Miss Mordaunt, you need not envy

her. Again let me say that you could very soon educate yourself to the level of any young ladies who adorn the Court balls."

"Ay; but then I should not be a poem," said Lily, with a shy arch side-glance at his face.

They were now on the bridge, and before Kenelm could answer Lily resumed quickly, "You need not come any farther, it is out of your way."

"I cannot be so disdainfully dismissed, Miss Mordaunt; I insist on seeing you to, at least your garden gate."

Lily made no objection, and again spoke,

"What sort of country do you live in when at home—is it like this?"

"Not so pretty; the features are larger, more hill and dale and woodland; yet there is one feature in our grounds which reminds me a little of this landscape: a light stream, somewhat wider, indeed, than your brooklet; but here and there the banks are so like those by Cromwell Lodge that I sometimes

start and fancy myself at home. I have a strange love for rivulets, and all running waters, and in my foot wanderings I find myself magnetically attracted towards them."

Lily listened with interest, and after a short pause said with a half-suppressed sigh, "Your home is much finer than any place here, even than Braefieldville, is it not? Mrs Braefield says your father is very rich."

"I doubt if he is richer than Mr Braefield, and though his house may be larger than Braefieldville, it is not so smartly furnished, and has no such luxurious hot-houses and conservatories. My father's tastes are like mine, very simple. Give him his library, and he would scarcely miss his fortune if he lost it. He has in this one immense advantage over me."

"You would miss fortune?" said Lily quickly.

"Not that; but my father is never tired of books. And shall I own it? there are

days when books tire me almost as much as they do you."

They were now at the garden gate. Lily with one hand on the latch held out the other to Kenelm, and her smile lit up the dull sky like a burst of sunshine, as she looked in his face and vanished.

BOOK VII.



CHAPTER I.

KENELM did not return home till dusk, and just as he was sitting down to his solitary meal there was a ring at the bell, and Mrs Jones ushered in Mr Thomas Bowles.

Though that gentleman had never written to announce the day of his arrival, he was not the less welcome.

“Only,” said Kenelm, “if you preserve the appetite I have lost, I fear you will find meagre fare to-day. Sit down, man.”

“Thank you, kindly, but I dined two hours ago in London, and I really can eat nothing more.”

Kenelm was too well-bred to press unwelcome hospitalities. In a very few minutes his frugal repast was ended, the cloth removed, the two men were left alone.

"Your room is here, of course, Tom; that was engaged from the day I asked you, but you ought to have given me a line to say when to expect you, so that I could have put our hostess on her mettle as to dinner or supper. You smoke still, of course: light your pipe."

"Thank you, Mr Chillingly, I seldom smoke now; but if you will excuse a cigar," and Tom produced a very smart cigar-case.

"Do as you would at home. I shall send word to Will Somers that you and I sup there to-morrow. You forgive me for letting out your secret. All straightforward now and henceforth. You come to their hearth as a friend, who will grow dearer to them both every year. Ah, Tom, this love for woman seems to me a very wonderful thing. It may sink a man into such deeps of evil, and lift a man into such heights of good."

"I don't know as to the good," said Tom mournfully, and laying aside his cigar.

"Go on smoking; I should like to keep you company: can you spare me one of your cigars?"

Tom offered his case. Kenelm extracted a cigar, lighted it, drew a few whiffs, and when he saw that Tom had resumed his own cigar, recommenced conversation.

"You don't know as to the good; but tell me honestly, do you think if you had not loved Jessie Wiles, you would be as good a man as you are now?"

"If I am better than I was, it is not because of my love for the girl."

"What then?"

"The loss of her."

Kenelm started, turned very pale, threw aside the cigar, rose and walked the room to and fro with very quick but very irregular strides.

Tom continued quietly. "Suppose I had won Jessie and married her, I don't think any idea of improving myself would have

entered my head. My uncle would have been very much offended at my marrying a day-labourer's daughter, and would not have invited me to Luscombe. I should have remained at Graveleigh, with no ambition of being more than a common farrier, an ignorant, noisy, quarrelsome man; and if I could not have made Jessie as fond of me as I wished, I should not have broken myself of drinking, and I shudder to think what a brute I might have been, when I see in the newspapers an account of some drunken wife-beater. How do we know but what that wife-beater loved his wife dearly before marriage, and she did not care for him? His home was unhappy, and so he took to drink and to wife-beating."

"I was right, then," said Kenelm, halting his strides, "when I told you it would be a miserable fate to be married to a girl whom you loved to distraction, and whose heart you could never warm to you, whose life you could never render happy."

"So right!"

“Let us drop that part of the subject at present,” said Kenelm, reseating himself, “and talk about your wish to travel. Though contented that you did not marry Jessie, though you can now, without anguish, greet her as the wife of another, still there are some lingering thoughts of her that make you restless; and you feel that you could more easily wrench yourself from these thoughts in a marked change of scene and adventure, that you might bury them altogether in the soil of a strange land. Is it so?”

“Ay, something of that, sir.”

Then Kenelm roused himself to talk of foreign lands, and to map out a plan of travel that might occupy some months. He was pleased to find that Tom had already learned enough of French to make himself understood at least upon commonplace matters, and still more pleased to discover that he had been not only reading the proper guide-books or manuals descriptive of the principal places in Europe worth visiting, but that he had acquired an interest in the

places; interest in the fame attached to them by their history in the past, or by the treasures of art they contained.

So they talked far into the night, and when Tom retired to his room Kenelm let himself out of the house noiselessly, and walked with slow steps towards the old summer-house in which he had sat with Lily. The wind had risen, scattering the clouds that had veiled the preceding day, so that the stars were seen in far chasms of the sky beyond—seen for a while in one place, and when the swift clouds rolled over them there, shining out elsewhere. Amid the varying sounds of the trees, through which swept the night gusts, Kenelm fancied he could distinguish the sigh of the willow on the opposite lawn of Grasmere.

CHAPTER II.

KENELM despatched a note to Will Somers early the next morning, inviting himself and Mr Bowles to supper that evening. His tact was sufficient to make him aware that in such social meal there would be far less restraint for each and all concerned than in a more formal visit from Tom during the day time ; and when Jessie, too, was engaged with customers to the shop.

But he led Tom through the town and showed him the shop itself, with its pretty goods at the plate glass windows, and its general air of prosperous trade ; then he carried him off into the lanes and fields of the country, drawing out the mind of his companion, and impressed with great admi-

ration of its marked improvement in culture, and in the trains of thought which culture opens out and enriches.

But throughout all their multiform range of subject, Kenelm could perceive that Tom was still pre-occupied and abstracted; the idea of the coming interview with Jessie weighed upon him.

When they left Cromwell Lodge at night-fall, to repair to the supper at Will's, Kenelm noticed that Bowles had availed himself of the contents of his carpet bag, to make some refined alterations in his dress. The alterations became him.

When they entered the parlour, Will rose from his chair with the evidence of deep emotion on his face, advanced to Tom, took his hand and grasped and dropped it without a word. Jessie saluted both guests alike, with drooping eyelids and an elaborate curtsy. The old mother alone was perfectly self-possessed and up to the occasion.

"I am heartily glad to see you, Mr. Bowles," said she, "and so all three of us

are, and ought to be ; and if baby was older, there would be four."

"And where on earth have you hidden baby?" cried Kenelm. "Surely he might have been kept up for me to-night, when I was expected; the last time I supped here I took you by surprise, and therefore had no right to complain of baby's want of respect to her parents' friends."

Jessie raised the window-curtain, and pointed to the cradle behind it. Kenelm linked his arm in Tom's, led him to the cradle, and leaving him alone to gaze on the sleeping inmate, seated himself at the table, between old Mrs Somers and Will. Will's eyes were turned away towards the curtain, Jessie holding its folds aside, and the formidable Tom, who had been the terror of his neighbourhood, bending smiling over the cradle; till at last he laid his large hand on the pillow, gently, timidly, careful not to awake the helpless sleeper, and his lips moved, doubtless with a blessing; then he

too came to the table, seating himself, and Jessie carried the cradle upstairs.

Will fixed his keen intelligent eyes on his by-gone rival; and noticing the changed expression of the once aggressive countenance, the changed costume in which, without tinge of rustic foppery, there was the token of a certain gravity of station scarcely compatible with a return to old loves and old habits in the village world, the last shadow of jealousy vanished from the clear surface of Will's affectionate nature.

"Mr Bowles," he exclaimed impulsively, "you have a kind heart and a good heart, and a generous heart. And your coming here to-night on this friendly visit is an honour which — which "—" Which," interrupted Kenelm, compassionating Will's embarrassment, "is on the side of us single men. In this free country a married man who has a male baby may be father to the Lord Chancellor or the Archbishop of Canterbury. But—well, my friends, such a meeting as

we have to-night does not come often ; and after supper let us celebrate it with a bowl of punch. If we have headaches the next morning none of us will grumble."

Old Mrs Somers laughed out jovially. "Bless you, sir, I did not think of the punch ; I will go and see about it," and, baby's socks still in her hands, she hastened from the room.

What with the supper, what with the punch, and what with Kenelm's art of cheery talk on general subjects, all reserve, all awkwardness, all shyness between the convivialists, rapidly disappeared. Jessie mingled in the talk ; perhaps (excepting only Kenelm) she talked more than the others, artlessly, gaily, no vestige of the old coquetry ; but, now and then, with a touch of genteel finery, indicative of her rise in life, and of the contact of the fancy shopkeeper with noble customers. It was a pleasant evening—Kenelm had resolved that it should be so. Not a hint of the obligations to Mr Bowles escaped until Will, following his visitor

to the door, whispered to Tom, "You don't want thanks, and I can't express them. But when we say our prayers at night, we have always asked God to bless him who brought us together, and has since made us so prosperous—I mean Mr Chillingly. To-night there will be another besides him, for whom we shall pray, and for whom baby, when he is older, will pray too."

Therewith Will's voice thickened; and he prudently receded, with no unreasonable fear lest the punch might make him too demonstrative of emotion if he said more.

Tom was very silent on the return to Cromwell Lodge; it did not seem the silence of depressed spirits, but rather of quiet meditation, from which Kenelm did not attempt to rouse him.

It was not till they reached the garden pales of Grasmere that Tom, stopping short, and turning his face to Kenelm, said——

"I am very grateful to you for this evening—very."

"It has revived no painful thoughts, then?"

“No; I feel so much calmer in mind than I ever believed I could have been, after seeing her again.”

“Is it possible!” said Kenelm, to himself. “How should I feel if I ever saw in Lily the wife of another man: the mother of his child?” At that question he shuddered, and an involuntary groan escaped from his lips. Just then having, willingly in those precincts, arrested his steps, when Tom paused to address him, something softly touched the arm which he had rested on the garden pale. He looked and saw that it was Blanche. The creature, impelled by its instincts towards night-wanderings, had, somehow or other, escaped from its own bed within the house, and hearing a voice that had grown somewhat familiar to its ear, crept from among the shrubs behind upon the edge of the pale. There it stood, with arched back, purring low as in pleased salutation.

Kenelm bent down and covered with kisses the blue ribbon which Lily’s hand had bound round the favourite’s neck.

Blanche submitted to the caress for a moment, and then catching a slight rustle among the shrubs, made by some awaking bird, sprang into the thick of the quivering leaves and vanished. .

Kenelm moved on with a quick impatient stride, and no further words were exchanged between him and his companion till they reached their lodging and parted for the night.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day, towards noon, Kenelm and his visitor, walking together along the brook-side, stopped before Izaak Walton's summer-house, and, at Kenelm's suggestion, entered therein to rest, and more at their ease to continue the conversation they had begun.

"You have just told me," said Kenelm, "that you feel as if a load were taken off your heart, now that you have again met Jessie Somers, and that you find her so changed that she is no longer the woman you loved. As to the change, whatever it be, I own, it seems to me for the better, in person, in manners, in character; of course I should not say this, if I were not convinced of your perfect sincerity when you

assured me that you are cured of the old wound. But I feel so deeply interested in the question how a fervent love, once entertained and enthroned in the heart of a man so earnestly affectionate and so warm-blooded as yourself, can be, all of a sudden, at a single interview, expelled or transferred into the calm sentiment of friendship, that I pray you to explain?"

"That is what puzzles me, sir," answered Tom, passing his hand over his forehead. "And I don't know if I can explain it."

"Think over it, and try."

Tom mused for some moments and then began. "You see, sir, that I was a very different man myself when I fell in love with Jessie Wiles, and said 'Come what may that girl shall be my wife. Nobody else shall have her.'"

"Agreed; go on."

"But while I was becoming a different man, when I thought of her—and I was always thinking of her—I still pictured her to myself as the same Jessie Wiles; and

though, when I did see her again at Graveleigh, after she had married—the day—”

“You saved her from the insolence of the squire.”

“—She was but very recently married. I did not realize her as married. I did not see her husband, and the difference within myself was only then beginning. Well, so all the time I was reading and thinking, and striving to improve my old self at Luscombe, still Jessie Wiles haunted me as the only girl I had ever loved, ever could love; I could not believe it possible that I could ever marry any one else. And lately I have been much pressed to marry some one else; all my family wish it; but the face of Jessie rose up before me, and I said to myself, ‘I should be a base man if I married one woman, while I could not get another woman out of my head.’ I must see Jessie once more, must learn whether her face is now really the face that haunts me when I sit alone; and I have seen her, and it is not that face; it may be handsomer but it is not

a girl's face, it is the face of a wife and a mother. And, last evening, while she was talking with an open-heartedness which I had never found in her before, I became strangely conscious of the difference in myself that had been silently at work within the last two years or so. Then, sir, when I was but an ill-conditioned, uneducated, petty village farrier, there was no inequality between me and a peasant girl; or rather, in all things except fortune, the peasant girl was much above me. But last evening I asked myself, on watching her and listening to her talk, 'If Jessie were now free, should I press her to be my wife?' and I answered myself 'No.'"

Kenelm listened with rapt attention, and exclaimed briefly, but passionately, "Why?"

"It seems as if I were giving myself airs to say why. But, sir, lately I have been thrown among persons, women as well as men, of a higher class than I was born in; and in a wife I should want a companion up to their mark, and who would keep me up

to mine; and, ah sir, I don't feel as if I could find that companion in Mrs Somers."

"I understand you now, Tom. But you are spoiling a silly romance of mine. I had fancied the little girl with the flower face would grow up to supply the loss of Jessie; and, I am so ignorant of the human heart, I did think it would take all the years required for the little girl to open into a woman, before the loss of the old love could be supplied. I see now that the poor little child with the flower face has no chance."

"Chance? Why Mr Chillingly," cried Tom evidently much nettled, "Susy is a dear little thing, but she is scarcely more than a mere charity girl. Sir, when I last saw you in London you touched on that matter as if I were still the village farrier's son who might marry a village labourer's daughter. But," added Tom, softening down his irritated tone of voice, "even if Susy were a lady born, I think a man would make a very great mistake, if he thought he could bring up a little girl to regard him as a father;

and then, when she grew up, expect her to accept him as a lover."

"Ah, you think that!" exclaimed Kenelm eagerly, and turning eyes that sparkled with joy towards the lawn of Grasmere. "You think that; it is very sensibly said—well—and you have been pressed to marry, and have hung back till you had seen again Mrs. Somers. Now you will be better disposed to such a step; tell me about it?"

"I said, last evening, that one of the principal capitalists at Luscombe, the leading corn-merchant, had offered to take me into partnership. And, sir, he has an only daughter, she is a very amiable girl, has had a first-rate education, and has such pleasant manners and way of talk, quite a lady. If I married her I should soon be the first man at Luscombe, and Luscombe, as you are no doubt aware, returns two members to Parliament; who knows, but that some day the farrier's son might be —." Tom stopped abruptly—abashed at the aspiring thought which, while speaking, had deepened his

hardy colour and flashed from his honest eyes.

“Ah!” said Kenelm, almost mournfully, “Is it so; must each man in his life play many parts? Ambition succeeds to love, the reasoning brain to the passionate heart. True, you are changed; my Tom Bowles is gone.”

“Not gone in his undying gratitude to you, sir,” said Tom, with great emotion. “Your Tom Bowles would give up all his dreams of wealth or of rising in life, and go through fire and water to serve the friend who first bid him be a new Tom Bowles! Don’t despise me as your own work: you said to me that terrible day, when madness was on my brow and crime within my heart, ‘I will be to you the truest friend man ever found in man.’ So you have been. You commanded me to read, you commanded me to think, you taught me that body should be the servant of mind.”

“Hush, hush, times are altered; it is you who can teach me now. Teach me, teach me; how does ambition replace love?”

How does the desire to rise in life become the all-mastering passion, and, should it prosper, the all-atoning consolation of our life? We can never be as happy, though we rose to the throne of the Cæsars, as we dream that we could have been, had Heaven but permitted us to dwell in the obscurest village, side by side with the woman we love."

Tom was exceedingly startled by such a burst of irrepressible passion from the man who had told him, that, though friends were found only once in a life, sweethearts were as plentiful as blackberries.

Again he swept his hand over his forehead, and replied hesitatingly. "I can't pretend to say what may be the case with others. But to judge by my own case it seems to be this: a young man who, out of his own business, has nothing to interest or excite him, finds content, interest, and excitement when he falls in love; and then, whether for good or ill, he thinks there is nothing like love in the world, he don't care

a fig for ambition then. Over and over again did my poor uncle ask me to come to him at Luscombe, and represent all the worldly advantage it would be to me; but I could not leave the village in which Jessie lived, and besides, I felt myself unfit to be anything higher than I was. But when I had been some time at Luscombe, and gradually got accustomed to another sort of people, and another sort of talk, then I began to feel interest in the same objects that interested those about me; and when, partly by mixing with better educated men, and partly by the pains I took to educate myself, I felt that I might now more easily rise above my uncle's rank of life than two years ago I could have risen above a farrier's forge, then the ambition to rise did stir in me and grew stronger every day. Sir, I don't think you can wake up a man's intellect but what you wake with it emulation. And after all emulation is ambition."

"Then I suppose I have no emulation in me, for certainly I have no ambition."

“That I can’t believe, sir, other thoughts may cover it over and keep it down for a time. But sooner or later, it will force its way to the top, as it has done with me. To get on in life, to be respected by those who know you, more and more as you grow older, I call that a manly desire. I am sure it comes as naturally to an Englishman as—as——”

“As the wish to knock down some other Englishman who stands in his way, does. I perceive now that you were always a very ambitious man, Tom ; the ambition has only taken another direction. Cæsar might have been

‘But the first wrestler on the green.’

“And now, I suppose, you abandon the idea of travel ; you will return to Luscombe, cured of all regret for the loss of Jessie ; you will marry the young lady you mention, and rise through progressive steps of alderman and mayor into the rank of member for Luscombe.”

"All that may come in good time," answered Tom, not resenting the tone of irony in which he was addressed, "but I still intend to travel; a year so spent must render me all the more fit for any station I aim at. I shall go back to Luscombe to arrange my affairs, come to terms with Mr Leland the corn-merchant against my return, and——"

"The young lady is to wait till then."

"Emily."

"Oh, that is the name? Emily! a much more elegant name than Jessie."

"Emily," continued Tom, with an unruffled placidity, which, considering the aggravating bitterness for which Kenelm had exchanged his wonted dulcitudes of indifferentism, was absolutely saintlike, "Emily knows that if she were my wife I should be proud of her, and will esteem me the more if she feels how resolved I am that she shall never be ashamed of me."

"Pardon me, Tom," said Kenelm, softened and laying his hand on his friend's shoulder

with brother-like tenderness. "Nature has made you a thorough gentleman ; and you could not think and speak more nobly if you had come into the world as the head of all the Howards."

CHAPTER IV.

TOM went away the next morning. He declined to see Jessie again, saying curtly, "I don't wish the impression made on me the other evening to incur a chance of being weakened."

Kenelm was in no mood to regret his friend's departure. Despite all the improvement in Tom's manners and culture, which raised him so much nearer to equality with the polite and instructed heir of the Chillinglys, Kenelm would have felt more in sympathy, and *rapprochment*, with the old disconsolate fellow-wanderer who had reclined with him on the grass, listening to the Minstrel's talk or verse, than he did with the practical, rising citizen of Luscombe. To the young lover of Lily

Mordaunt there was a discord, a jar, in the knowledge that the human heart admits of such well-reasoned, well-justified transfers of allegiance ; a Jessie to-day, or an Emily to-morrow—" *La reine est morte ; vive la reine.*"

An hour or two after Tom had gone, Kenelm found himself almost mechanically led towards Braefieldville. He had instinctively divined Elsie's secret wish with regard to himself and Lily, however skilfully she thought she had concealed it.

At Braefieldville he should hear talk of Lily, and in the scenes where Lily had been first beheld.

He found Mrs Braefield alone in the drawing-room, seated by a table covered with flowers, which she was assorting and inter-mixing for the vases to which they were destined.

It struck him that her manner was more reserved than usual and somewhat embarrassed ; and when, after a few preliminary matters of small talk, he rushed boldly *in medias res*, and asked if she had seen Mrs

Cameron lately? She replied briefly, "Yes, I called there the other day," and immediately changed the conversation to the troubled state of the Continent.

Kenelm was resolved not to be so put off, and presently returned to the charge.

"The other day you proposed an excursion to the site of the Roman villa, and said you would ask Mrs Cameron to be of the party. Perhaps you have forgotten it?"

"No; but Mrs Cameron declines. We can ask the Emlyns instead. He will be an excellent *cicerone*."

"Excellent! Why did Mrs Cameron decline?"

Elsie hesitated, and then lifted her clear brown eyes to his face, with a sudden determination to bring matters to a crisis.

"I cannot say why Mrs Cameron declined, but in declining she acted very wisely and very honourably. Listen to me, Mr Chillingly. You know how highly I esteem, and how cordially I like you, and judging by what I felt for some weeks, perhaps

longer, after we parted at Tor Hadham—" Here again she hesitated, and with a half laugh and a slight blush, again went resolutely on. "If I were Lily's aunt or elder sister, I should do as Mrs Cameron does; decline to let Lily see much more of a young gentleman too much above her in wealth and station for—"

"Stop," cried Kenelm haughtily, "I cannot allow that any man's wealth or station would warrant his presumption in thinking himself above Miss Mordaunt."

"Above her in natural grace and refinement, certainly not. But in the world there are other considerations which, perhaps, Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly might take into account."

"You did not think of that before you last saw Mrs Cameron."

"Honestly speaking, I did not. Assured that Miss Mordaunt was a gentlewoman by birth, I did not sufficiently reflect upon other disparities."

"You know, then, that she is by birth a gentlewoman?"

“I only know it as all here do, by the assurance of Mrs Cameron, whom no one could suppose not to be a lady. But there are different degrees of lady and of gentleman, which are little heeded in the ordinary intercourse of society, but become very perceptible in questions of matrimonial alliance; and Mrs Cameron herself says very plainly that she does not consider her niece to belong to that station in life from which Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly would naturally wish their son should select his bride. Then (holding out her hand) pardon me if I have wounded or offended you. I speak as a true friend to you and to Lily both. Earnestly I advise you, if Miss Mordaunt be the cause of your lingering here, earnestly I advise you to leave while yet in time for her peace of mind and your own.”

“Her peace of mind,” said Kenelm, in low faltering tones, scarcely hearing the rest of Mrs Braefield’s speech. “Her peace of mind. Do you sincerely think that she cares for me—could care for me—if I staid?”

“I wish I could answer you decidedly. I am not in the secrets of her heart. I can but conjecture that it might be dangerous for the peace of any young girl to see too much of a man like yourself, to divine that he loved her, and not to be aware that he could not, with the approval of his family, ask her to become his wife.”

Kenelm bent his face down, and covered it with his right hand. He did not speak for some moments. Then he rose, the fresh cheek very pale, and said—

“You are right. Miss Mordaunt’s peace of mind must be the first consideration. Excuse me if I quit you thus abruptly. You have given me much to think of, and I can only think of it adequately when alone.”

CHAPTER V.

FROM Kenelm Chillingly to Sir Peter Chillingly.

“MY FATHER, MY DEAR FATHER,—This is no reply to your letters. I know not if itself can be called a letter. I cannot yet decide whether it be meant to reach your hands. Tired with talking to myself, I sit down to talk to you. Often have I reproached myself for not seizing every fitting occasion to let you distinctly know how warmly I love, how deeply I reverence you; you, O friend, O father. But we Chillinglys are not a demonstrative race. I don't remember that you, by words, ever expressed to me the truth that you love your son infinitely more

than he deserves. Yet, do I not know that you would send all your beloved old books to the hammer, rather than I should pine in vain for some untried, if sinless, delight on which I had set my heart? And do you not know, equally well, that I would part with all my heritage, and turn day-labourer, rather than you should miss the beloved old books?

That mutual knowledge is taken for granted in all that my heart yearns to pour forth to your own. But, if I divine aright, a day is coming when, as between you and me, there must be a sacrifice on the part of one to the other. If so, I implore that the sacrifice may come from you. How is this? How am I so ungenerous, so egotistical, so selfish, so ungratefully unmindful of all I already owe to you, and may never repay? I can only answer, 'It is fate, it is nature, it is love'—

* * * *

“Here I must break off. It is midnight, the moon halts opposite to the window at which I sit, and on the stream that runs

below there is a long narrow track on which every wave trembles in her light ; on either side of the moonlit track all the other waves, running equally to their grave in the invisible deep, seem motionless and dark. I can write no more."

* * * *

Dated two days later.

"THEY say she is beneath us in wealth and station. Are we, my father—we, two well-born gentlemen—coveters of gold or lackeys of the great? When I was at College, if there were any there more heartily despised than another, it was the parasite and the tuft-hunter ; the man who chose his friends according as their money or their rank might be of use to him. If so mean were the choice is so little important to the happiness and career of a man who has something of manhood in him, how much more mean to be the parasite and tuft-hunter in deciding what woman to love, what woman to select as the sweetener and ennobler of one's everyday life ! Could she be to my life that

sweetener, that ennobler? I firmly believe it. Already life itself has gained a charm that I never even guessed in it before; already I begin, though as yet but faintly and vaguely, to recognise that interest in the objects and aspirations of my fellow-men, which is strongest in those whom posterity ranks among its ennoblers. In this quiet village it is true that I might find examples enough to prove that man is not meant to meditate upon life, but to take active part in it, and in that action to find his uses. But I doubt if I should have profited by such examples; if I should not have looked on this small stage of the world as I have looked on the large one, with the indifferent eyes of a spectator on a trite familiar play carried on by ordinary actors, had not my whole being suddenly leapt out of philosophy into passion, and, at once made warmly human, sympathized with humanity wherever it burned and glowed. Ah, is there to be any doubt of what station, as mortal bride, is due to her—her, my princess, my Fairy? If so,

how contented you shall be, my father, with the worldly career of your son! how perseveringly he will strive (and when did perseverance fail?) to supply all his deficiencies of intellect, genius, knowledge, by the energy concentrated on a single object which—more than intellect, genius, knowledge, unless they attain to equal energy equally concentrated—commands what the world calls honours.

“Yes, with her, with her as the bearer of my name, with her to whom I, whatever I might do of good or of great, could say, ‘It is thy work,’ I promise that you shall bless the day when you took to your arms a daughter.

* * * *

“‘Thou art in contact with the beloved in all that thou feelest elevated above thee.’ So is it written by one of those weird Germans who search in our bosoms for the seeds of buried truths, and conjure them into flowers before we ourselves were even aware of the seeds.

“Every thought that associates itself with

my beloved seems to me born with wings.

* * * *

I have just seen her, just parted from her. Since I had been told—kindly, wisely told—that I had no right to hazard her peace of mind unless I were privileged to woo and to win her, I promised myself that I would shun her presence until I had bared my heart to you, as I am doing now, and received that privilege from yourself; for even had I never made the promise that binds my honour, your consent and blessing must hallow my choice. I do not feel as if I could dare to ask one so innocent and fair to wed an ungrateful, disobedient son. But this evening I met her, unexpectedly, at the vicar's, an excellent man, from whom I have learned much; whose precepts, whose example, whose delight in his home, and his life at once active and serene, are in harmony with my own dreams when I dream of her.

“I will tell you the name of the beloved—hold, it is as yet a profound secret between you and me. But oh for the day when

I may hear you call her by that name, and print on her forehead the only kiss by man of which I should not be jealous.

“It is Sunday, and after the evening service it is my friend’s custom to gather his children round him, and, without any formal sermon or discourse, engage their interest in subjects harmonious to associations with the sanctity of the day ; often not directly bearing upon religion ; more often, indeed, playfully starting from some little incident or some slight story book which had amused the children in the course of the past week, and then gradually winding into reference to some sweet moral precept or illustration from some divine example. It is a maxim with him that, while much that children must learn they can only learn well through conscious labour, and as positive task-work, yet Religion should be connected in their minds, not with labour and task-work, but should become insensibly infused into their habits of thought, blending itself with memories and images of peace and love ; with

the indulgent tenderness of the earliest teachers, the sinless mirthfulness of the earliest home; with consolation in after sorrows, support through after trials, and never parting company with its twin sister, Hope.

“I entered the vicar’s room this evening just as the group had collected round him. By the side of his wife sat a lady in whom I feel a keen interest. Her face wears that kind of calm which speaks of the lassitude bequeathed by sorrow. She is the aunt of my beloved one. Lily had nestled herself on a low ottoman, at the good pastor’s feet, with one of his little girls, round whose shoulder she had wound her arm. She is much more fond of the companionship of children than that of girls of her own age. The vicar’s wife, a very clever woman, once, in my hearing, took her to task for this preference, asking her why she persisted in grouping herself with mere infants who could teach her nothing? Ah! could you have seen the innocent, angel-like expression of her face

when she answered simply, ‘I suppose because with them I feel safer, I mean nearer to God.’

“Mr Emlyn—that is the name of the vicar—deduced his homily this evening from a pretty fairy tale which Lily had been telling to his children the day before, and which he drew her on to repeat.

“Take, in brief, the substance of the story:—

“‘Once on a time, a king and queen made themselves very unhappy because they had no heir to their throne; and they prayed for one; and lo, on some bright summer morning, the Queen, waking from sleep, saw a cradle beside her bed, and in the cradle a beautiful sleeping babe. Great day throughout the kingdom! But as the infant grew up, it became very wayward and fretful; it lost its beauty, it would not learn its lessons, it was as naughty as a child could be. The parents were very sorrowful; the heir, so longed for, promised to be a great plague to themselves and their subjects. At last one

day, to add to their trouble, two little bumps appeared on the Prince's shoulders. All the doctors were consulted as to the cause and the cure of this deformity. Of course they tried the effect of back-bands and steel machines, which gave the poor little Prince great pain, and made him more unamiable than ever. The bumps, nevertheless, grew larger, and as they increased, so the Prince sickened and pined away. At last a skilful surgeon proposed, as the only chance of saving the Prince's life, that the bumps should be cut out, and the next morning was fixed for that operation. But at night the Queen saw, or dreamed she saw, a beautiful shape standing by her bedside. And it said to her reproachfully, 'Ungrateful woman! How wouldst thou repay me for the precious boon that my favour bestowed on thee? In me behold the Queen of the Fairies. For the heir to thy kingdom, I consigned to thy charge an infant from Fairy-land, to become a blessing to thee and to thy people; and thou wouldst inflict upon it

a death of torture by the surgeon's knife.' And the Queen answered: 'Precious indeed thou mayest call the boon! A miserable, sickly, feverish changeling.'

“ ‘Art thou so dull,’ said the beautiful visitant, ‘as not to comprehend that the earliest instincts of the fairy child would be those of discontent, at the exile from its native home? and in that discontent it would have pined itself to death, or grown up, soured and malignant, a fairy still in its power but a fairy of wrath and evil, had not the strength of its inborn nature sufficed to develop the growth of its wings. That which thy blindness condemns as the deformity of the human-born, is to the fairy-born the crowning perfection of its beauty. Woe to thee, if thou suffer not the wings of the fairy child to grow.’

“ ‘And the next morning the Queen sent away the surgeon when he came with his horrible knife, and removed the back-board and the steel machines from the Prince's shoulders, though all the doctors predicted

that the child would die. And from that moment the royal heir began to recover bloom and health. And when at last, out of those deforming bumps, budded delicately forth the plumage of snow-white wings, the wayward peevishness of the Prince gave place to sweet temper. Instead of scratching his teachers, he became the quickest and most docile of pupils, grew up to be the joy of his parents and the pride of their people; and the people said, 'In him we shall have hereafter such a king as we have never yet known.'

"Here ended Lily's tale. I cannot convey to you a notion of the pretty, playful manner in which it was told. Then she said, with a grave shake of the head, 'But you do not seem to know what happened afterwards. Do you suppose that the Prince never made use of his wings? Listen to me. It was discovered by the courtiers who attended on his Royal Highness that on certain nights, every week, he disappeared. In fact, on these nights, obedient to the

instinct of the wings, he flew from palace halls into Fairyland; coming back thence all the more lovingly disposed towards the human home from which he had escaped for awhile.'

"'Oh my children,' interposed the preacher earnestly, 'the wings would be given to us in vain if we did not obey the instinct which allures us to soar; vain, no less, would be the soaring, were it not towards the home whence we came, bearing back from its native airs a stronger health, and a serener joy; more reconciled to the duties of earth by every new flight into heaven.'

"As he thus completed the moral of Lily's fairy tale, the girl rose from her low seat, took his hand, kissed it reverently, and walked away towards the window. I could see that she was affected even to tears, which she sought to conceal. Later in the evening, when we were dispersed on the lawn, for a few minutes before the party broke up, Lily came to my side timidly and said, in a low whisper:

“‘Are you angry with me? what have I done to displease you?’

“‘Angry with you; displeased? How can you think of me so unjustly?’

“‘It is so many days since you have called, since I have seen you,’ she said, so artlessly, looking up at me with eyes in which tears still seemed to tremble.

“Before I could trust myself to reply, her aunt approached, and noticing me with a cold and distant ‘Good night,’ led away her niece.

“I had calculated on walking back to their home with them, as I generally have done when we met at another house. But the aunt had probably conjectured I might be at the vicarage that evening, and in order to frustrate my intention, had engaged a carriage for their return. No doubt she has been warned against permitting further intimacy with her niece.

“My father, I must come to you at once, discharge my promise, and receive from your own lips your consent to my choice;

for you will consent, will you not? But I wish you to be prepared beforehand, and I shall therefore put up these disjointed fragments of my commune with my own heart and with yours, and post them to-morrow. Expect me to follow them, after leaving you a day free to consider them alone — alone, my dear father; they are meant for no eye but yours.

“K. C.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE next day Kenelm walked into the town, posted his voluminous letter to Sir Peter, and then looked in at the shop of Will Somers, meaning to make some purchases of basket-work or trifling fancy goods in Jessie's pretty store of such articles, that might please the taste of his mother.

On entering the shop his heart beat quicker. He saw two young forms bending over the counter, examining the contents of a glass case. One of these customers was Clemmy; in the other there was no mistaking the slight graceful shape of Lily Mordaunt. Clemmy was exclaiming, "Oh it is so pretty, Mrs Somers; but," turning her eyes from the counter to a silk purse in

her hand, she added sorrowfully, "I can't buy it. I have not got enough, not by a great deal."

"And what is it, Miss Clemmy?" asked Kenelm.

The two girls turned round at his voice, and Clemmy's face brightened.

"Look here," she said, "is it not too lovely?"

The object thus admired and coveted was a little gold-locket, enriched by a cross composed of small pearls.

"I assure you, miss," said Jessie, who had acquired all the coaxing arts of her trade, "it is really a great bargain. Miss Mary Burrows, who was here just before you came, bought one not nearly so pretty, and gave ten shillings more for it."

Miss Mary Burrows was the same age as Miss Clementina Emlyn, and there was a rivalry as to smartness between those youthful beauties. "Miss Burrows!" sighed Clemmy very scornfully.

But Kenelm's attention was distracted

from Clemmy's locket to a little ring which Lily had been persuaded by Mrs Somers to try on, and which she now drew off and returned with a shake of the head. Mrs Somers, who saw that she had small chance of selling the locket to Clemmy, was now addressing herself to the elder girl more likely to have sufficient pocket-money, and whom, at all events, it was quite safe to trust.

"The ring fits you so nicely, Miss Mordaunt, and every young lady of your age wears at least one ring; allow me to put it up?" She added in a lower voice, "Though we only sell the articles in this case on commission, it is all the same to us whether we are paid now or at Christmas."

"'Tis no use tempting me, Mrs Somers," said Lily, laughing, and then with a grave air, "I promised Lion, I mean my guardian, never to run into debt, and I never will."

Lily turned resolutely from the perilous counter, taking up a paper that contained a

new ribbon she had bought for Blanche, and Clemmy reluctantly followed her out of the shop.

Kenelm lingered behind and selected very hastily a few trifles, to be sent to him that evening with some specimens of basket-work left to Will's tasteful discretion; then purchased the locket on which Clemmy had set her heart; but all the while his thoughts were fixed on the ring which Lily had tried on. It was no sin against etiquette to give the locket to a child like Clemmy, but would it not be a cruel impertinence to offer a gift to Lily?

Jessie spoke :

"Miss Mordaunt took a great fancy to this ring, Mr Chillingly. I am sure her aunt would like her to have it. I have a great mind to put it by on the chance of Mrs Cameron's calling here. It would be a pity if it were bought by some one else."

"I think," said Kenelm, "that I will take the liberty of showing it to Mrs Cameron. No doubt she will buy it for her niece. Add

the price of it to my bill." He seized the ring and carried it off; a very poor little simple ring, with a single stone, shaped as a heart, not half the price of the locket.

Kenelm rejoined the young ladies just where the path split into two, the one leading direct to Grasmere, the other through the churchyard to the Vicarage. He presented the locket to Clemmy with brief kindly words which easily removed any scruple she might have had in accepting it; and, delighted with her acquisition, she bounded off to the Vicarage, impatient to show the prize to her mamma and sisters, and more especially to Miss Mary Burrows, who was coming to lunch with them.

Kenelm walked on slowly by Lily's side.

"You have a good heart, Mr Chillingly," said she, somewhat abruptly. "How it must please you to give such pleasure! Dear little Clemmy!"

This artless praise, and the perfect absence of envy or thought of self evinced by

her joy that her friend's wish was gratified, though her own was not, enchanted Kenelm.

"If it pleases to give pleasure," said he, "it is your turn to be pleased now, you can confer such pleasure upon me."

"How?" she asked falteringly, and with quick change of colour.

"By conceding to me the same right your little friend has allowed."

And he drew forth the ring.

Lily reared her head with a first impulse of haughtiness. But when her eyes met his the head drooped down again, and a slight shiver ran through her frame.

"Miss Mordaunt," resumed Kenelm, mastering his passionate longing to fall at her feet and say, "But, oh! in this ring it is my love that I offer—it is my troth that I pledge!" "Miss Mordaunt, spare me the misery of thinking that I have offended you; least of all would I do so on this day, for it may be some little while before I see you again. I am going home for a few days

upon a matter which may affect the happiness of my life, and on which I should be a bad son and an unworthy gentleman if I did not consult him who, in all that concerns my affections has trained me to turn to him, the father; in all that concerns my honour to him, the gentleman."

A speech more unlike that which any delineator of manners and morals in the present day would put into the mouth of a lover, no critic in the 'Londoner' could ridicule. But, somehow or other, this poor little tamer of butterflies and teller of fairy tales comprehended on the instant all that this most eccentric of human beings thus frigidly left untold. Into her innermost heart it sank more deeply than would the most ardent declaration put into the lips of the boobies or the scamps in whom delineators of manners in the present day too often debase the magnificent chivalry embodied in the name of 'Lover.'

Where these two had, while speaking, halted on the path along the brookside, there

was a bench, on which it so happened that they had seated themselves weeks before. A few moments later on that bench they were seated again.

And the trumpery little ring with its turquoise heart was on Lily's finger, and there they continued to sit for nearly half an hour; not talking much, but wondrously happy; not a single vow of troth interchanged. No, not even a word that could be construed into "I love." And yet when they rose from the bench, and went silently along the brookside, each knew that the other was beloved.

When they reached the gate that admitted into the garden of Grasmere, Kenelm made a slight start. Mrs Cameron was leaning over the gate. Whatever alarm at the appearance Kenelm might have felt was certainly not shared by Lily; she advanced lightly before him, kissed her aunt on the cheek, and passed on across the lawn with a bound in her step and the carol of a song upon her lips.

Kenelm remained by the gate, face to face with Mrs Cameron. She opened the gate, put her arm in his, and led him back along the brookside.

“I am sure, Mr Chillingly,” she said, “that you will not impute to my words any meaning more grave than that which I wish them to convey, when I remind you that there is no place too obscure to escape from the ill-nature of gossip, and you must own that my niece incurs the chance of its notice if she be seen walking alone in these by-paths with a man of your age and position, and whose sojourn in the neighbourhood, without any ostensible object or motive, has already begun to excite conjecture. I do not for a moment assume that you regard my niece in any other light than that of an artless child whose originality of tastes or fancy may serve to amuse you; and still less do I suppose that she is in danger of misrepresenting any attentions on your part. But for her sake I am bound to consider what others may say. Excuse me then if I

add that I think you are also bound in honour and in good feeling to do the same. Mr Chillingly, it would give me a great sense of relief if it suited your plans to move from the neighbourhood."

"My dear Mrs Cameron," answered Kenelm, who had listened to this speech with imperturbable calm of visage; "I thank you much for your candour, and I am glad to have this opportunity of informing you that I am about to move from this neighbourhood, with the hope of returning to it in a very few days and rectifying your mistake as to the point of view in which I regard your niece. In a word," here the expression of his countenance and the tone of his voice underwent a sudden change, "it is the dearest wish of my heart to be empowered by my parents to assure you of the warmth with which they will welcome your niece as their daughter, should she deign to listen to my suit and entrust me with the charge of her happiness."

Mrs Cameron stopped short, gazing into

his face with a look of inexpressible dismay.

"No! Mr Chillingly," she exclaimed, "this must not be—cannot be. Put out of your mind an idea so wild. A young man's senseless romance. Your parents cannot consent to your union with my niece; I tell you beforehand they cannot."

"But why?" said Kenelm, with a slight smile, and not much impressed by the vehemence of Mrs Cameron's adjuration.

"Why?" she repeated passionately; and then recovering something of her habitual weariness of quiet. "The why is easily explained. Mr. Kenelm Chillingly is the heir of a very ancient house and, I am told, of considerable estates. Lily Mordaunt is a nobody, an orphan, without fortune, without connexion, the ward of a humbly born artist, to whom she owes the roof that shelters her; she is without the ordinary education of a gentlewoman; she has seen nothing of the world in which you move. Your parents have not the right to allow a

son so young as yourself to throw himself out of his proper sphere by a rash and imprudent alliance. And, never would I consent, never would Walter Melville consent, to her entering into any family reluctant to receive her. There—that is enough. Dismiss the notion so lightly entertained. And farewell.”

“Madam,” answered Kenelm very earnestly, “believe me, that had I not entertained the hope approaching to conviction that the reasons you urge against my presumption will not have the weight with my parents which you ascribe to them, I should not have spoken to you thus frankly. Young though I be, still I might fairly claim the right to choose for myself in marriage. But I gave to my father a very binding promise that I would not formally propose to any one till I had acquainted him with my desire to do so, and obtained his approval of my choice; and he is the last man in the world who would withhold that approval where my heart is set on it as it is now. I want

no fortune with a wife, and should I ever care to advance my position in the world no connexion could help me like the approving smile of the woman I love. There is but one qualification which my parents would deem they had the right to exact from my choice of one who is to bear our name. I mean that she should have the appearance, the manners, the principles—and my mother at least might add—the birth of a gentlewoman. Well, as to appearance and manners, I have seen much of fine society from my boyhood, and found no one among the highest born who can excel the exquisite refinement of every look, and the inborn delicacy of every thought, in her of whom, if mine, I shall be as proud as I shall be fond. As to defects in the frippery and tinsel of a boarding-school education, they are very soon remedied. Remains only the last consideration — birth. Mrs Braefield informs me that you have assured her that, though circumstances into which as yet I have no right to inquire, have made her the ward

of a man of humble origin, Miss Mordaunt is of gentle birth. Do you deny that?"

"No," said Mrs Cameron, hesitating, but with a flash of pride in her eyes as she went on. "No. I cannot deny that my niece is descended from those who, in point of birth, were not unequal to your own ancestors. But what of that?" she added, with a bitter despondency of tone. "Equality of birth ceases when one falls into poverty, obscurity, neglect, nothingness!"

"Really this is a morbid habit on your part. But since we have thus spoken so confidentially, will you not empower me to answer the question which will probably be put to me, and the answer to which will, I doubt not, remove every obstacle in the way of my happiness. Whatever the reasons which might very sufficiently induce you to preserve, whilst living so quietly in this place, a discreet silence as to the parentage of Miss Mordaunt and your own—and I am well aware that those whom altered circumstances of fortune have compelled to

altered modes of life, may disdain to parade to strangers the pretensions to a higher station than that to which they reconcile their habits—whatever, I say, such reasons for silence to strangers, should they preclude you from confiding to me, an aspirant to your niece's hand, a secret which, after all, cannot be concealed from her future husband?"

"From her future husband? of course not," answered Mrs Cameron. "But I decline to be questioned by one whom I may never see again, and of whom I know so little. I decline, indeed, to assist in removing any obstacle to an union with my niece, which I hold to be in every way unsuited to either party. I have no cause even to believe that my niece would accept you if you were free to propose to her. You have not, I presume, spoken to her as an aspirant to her hand. You have not addressed to her any declaration of your attachment, or sought to extract from her inexperience any words that warrant you in

thinking that her heart will break if she never sees you again."

"I do not merit such cruel and taunting questions," said Kenelm indignantly. "But I will say no more now. When we again meet let me hope you will treat me less unkindly. Adieu!"

"Stay, sir. A word or two more. You persist in asking your father and Lady Chillingly to consent to your proposal to Miss Mordaunt?"

"Certainly I do."

"And you will promise me, on your word as a gentleman, to state fairly all the causes which might fairly operate against their consent; the poverty, the humble rearing, the imperfect education of my niece; so that they might not hereafter say you had entrapped their consent, and avenge themselves for your deceit by contempt for her?"

"Ah, madam, madam, you really try my patience too far. But take my promise, if you can hold that of value from one whom you can suspect of deliberate deceit."

“I beg your pardon, Mr Chillingly. Bear with my rudeness. I have been so taken by surprise I scarcely know what I am saying. But let us understand each other completely before we part. If your parents withhold their consent you will communicate it to me; me only, not to Lily. I repeat I know nothing of the state of her affections. But it might embitter any girl’s life to be led on to love one whom she could not marry.”

“It shall be as you say. But if they do consent?”

“Then you will speak to me before you seek an interview with Lily, for then comes another question: Will her guardian consent?—and—and—”

“And what?”

“No matter. I rely on your honour in this request, as in all else. Good-day.”

She turned back with hurried footsteps, muttering to her herself, “But they will not consent. Heaven grant that they will not consent, or if they do, what—what is to

be said or done? Oh, that Walter Melville were here, or that I knew where to write to him!"

On his way back to Cromwell Lodge Kenelm was overtaken by the vicar.

"I was coming to you, my dear Mr Chillingly, first to thank you for the very pretty present with which you have gladdened the heart of my little Clemmy, and next to ask you to come with me quietly to-day to meet Mr —, the celebrated antiquarian, who came to Moleswick this morning at my request, to examine that old gothic tomb in our churchyard. Only think,—though he cannot read the inscription any better than we can, he knows all about its history. It seems that a young knight renowned for feats of valour in the reign of Henry IV. married a daughter of one of those great Earls of Montfichet who were then the most powerful family in these parts. He was slain in defending the church from an assault by some disorderly rioters of the Lollard faction; he fell on the very spot where the tomb is

now placed. That accounts for its situation in the churchyard, not within the fabric. Mr —— discovered this fact in an old memoir of the ancient and once famous family to which the young knight Albert belonged, and which came, alas ! to so shameful an end, the Fletwodes, Barons of Fletwode and Malpas. What a triumph over pretty Lily Mordaunt, who always chose to imagine that the tomb must be that of some heroine of her own romantic invention ! Do come to dinner ; Mr —— is a most agreeable man, and full of interesting anecdote."

"I am so sorry I cannot. I am obliged to return home at once for a few days. That old family of Fletwode ! I think I see before me, while we speak, the grey tower in which they once held sway ; and the last of the race following Mammon along the Progress of the Age—a convicted felon ! What a terrible satire on the pride of birth !"

Kenelm left Cromwell Lodge that evening, but he still kept on his apartments there, saying he might be back unexpect-

edly any day in the course of the next week.

He remained two days in London, wishing all that he had communicated to Sir Peter in writing to sink into his father's heart before a personal appeal to it.

The more he revolved the ungracious manner in which Mrs Cameron had received his confidence, the less importance he attached to it. An exaggerated sense of disparities of fortune in a person who appeared to him to have the pride so common to those who have known better days, coupled with a nervous apprehension lest his family should ascribe to her any attempt to ensnare a very young man of considerable worldly pretensions into a marriage with a penniless niece, seemed to account for much that had at first perplexed and angered him. And if, as he conjectured, Mrs Cameron had once held a much higher position in the world than she did now—a conjecture warranted by a certain peculiar conventional undeniable elegance which characterized her habitual

manner—and was now, as she implied, actually a dependant on the bounty of a painter who had only just acquired some professional distinction, she might well shrink from the mortification of becoming an object of compassion to her richer neighbours ; nor, when he came to think of it, had he any more right than those neighbours to any confidence as to her own or Lily's parentage, so long as he was not formally entitled to claim admission into her privacy.

London seemed to him intolerably dull and wearisome. He called nowhere except at Lady Glenalvon's : he was glad to hear from the servants that she was still at Exmundham. He relied much on the influence of the queen of the Fashion with his mother, whom he knew would be more difficult to persuade than Sir Peter, nor did he doubt that he should win to his side that sympathizing and warm-hearted queen.

CHAPTER VII.

It is somewhere about three weeks since the party invited by Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly assembled at Exmundham, and they are still there, though people invited to a country house have seldom compassion enough for the dulness of its owner to stay more than three days. Mr Chillingly Mivers, indeed, had not exceeded that orthodox limit. Quietly observant, during his stay, of young Gordon's manner towards Cecilia, and hers towards him, he had satisfied himself that there was no cause to alarm Sir Peter or induce the worthy baronet to regret the invitation he had given to that clever kinsman. For all the visitors remaining, Exmundham had a charm.

To Lady Glenalvon, because in the hostess she met her most familiar friend when both were young girls, and because it pleased her to note the interest which Cecilia Travers took in the place so associated with memories of the man to whom it was Lady Glenalvon's hope to see her united. To Gordon Chillingly, because no opportunity could be so favourable for his own well-concealed designs on the hand and heart of the heiress. To the heiress herself the charm needs no explanation.

To Leopold Travers the attractions of Exmundham were unquestionably less fascinating. Still even he was well pleased to prolong his stay. His active mind found amusement in wandering over an estate the acreage of which would have warranted a much larger rental, and lecturing Sir Peter on the old-fashioned system of husbandry which that good-natured easy proprietor permitted his tenants to adopt, as well as on the number of superfluous hands that were employed on the pleasure grounds and in

the general management of the estate, such as carpenters, sawyers, woodmen, bricklayers and smiths.

When the squire said, "You could do just as well with a third of those costly dependants," Sir Peter, unconsciously plagiarizing the answer of the old French grand seigneur, replied, "Very likely. But the question is, could the rest do just as well without me?"

Exmundham, indeed, was a very expensive place to keep up. The house, built by some ambitious Chillingly three centuries ago, would have been large for an owner of thrice the revenues; and though the flower garden was smaller than that at Braefieldville, there were paths and drives through miles of young plantations and old woodlands that furnished lazy occupation to an army of labourers. No wonder that, despite his nominal ten thousand a year, Sir Peter was far from being a rich man. Exmundham devoured at least half the rental. The active mind of Leopold Travers also found ample occupation in the stores of his host's exten-

sive library. Travers, never much of a reader, was by no means a despiser of learning, and he soon took to historical and archæological researches with the ardour of a man who must always throw energy into any pursuit that occasion presents as an escape from indolence. Indolent, Leopold Travers never could be. But, more than either of these resources of occupation, the companionship of Chillingly Gordon excited his interest and quickened the current of his thoughts. Always fond of renewing his own youth in the society of the young, and of the sympathizing temperament which belongs to cordial natures, he had, as we have seen, entered very heartily into the ambition of George Belvoir, and reconciled himself very pliantly to the humours of Kenelm Chillingly. But the first of these two was a little too commonplace, the second a little too eccentric, to enlist the complete good-fellowship which, being alike very clever and very practical, Leopold Travers established with that very clever and very practical

representative of the rising generation, Chillingly Gordon. Between them there was this meeting-ground, political and worldly, a great contempt for innocuous old-fashioned notions; added to which, in the mind of Leopold Travers, was a contempt—which would have been complete, but that the contempt admitted dread—of harmful new-fashioned notions which, interpreted by his thoughts, threatened ruin to his country and downfall to the follies of existent society, and which, interpreted by his language, tamed itself into the man of the world's phrase, "Going too far for me." Notions which, by the much more cultivated intellect and the immeasurably more soaring ambition of Chillingly Gordon, might be viewed and criticized thus: "Could I accept these doctrines? I don't see my way to being Prime Minister of a country in which religion and capital are still powers to be consulted. And, putting aside religion and capital, I don't see how, if these doctrines passed into law, with a good coat on my back I should not be a

sufferer. Either I, as having a good coat, should have it torn off my back as a capitalist, or, if I remonstrated in the name of moral honesty, be put to death as a religionist."

Therefore when Leopold Travers said "Of course we must go on," Chillingly Gordon smiled and answered, "Certainly, go on." And when Leopold Travers added, "But we may go too far," Chillingly Gordon shook his head, and replied, "How true that is! Certainly, too far."

Apart from the congeniality of political sentiment, there were other points of friendly contact between the older and younger man. Each was an exceedingly pleasant man of the world; and, though Leopold Travers could not have plumbed certain deeps in Chillingly Gordon's nature—and in every man's nature there are deeps which his ablest observer cannot fathom—yet he was not wrong when he said to himself, "Gordon is a gentleman."

Utterly would my readers misconceive that very clever young man, if they held him to

be a hypocrite like Blifil or Joseph Surface. Chillingly Gordon, in every private sense of the word, was a gentleman. If he had staked his whole fortune on a rubber at whist, and an undetected glance at his adversary's hand would have made the difference between loss and gain, he would have turned away his head and said, "Hold up your cards." Neither, as I have had occasion to explain before, was he actuated by any motive in common with the vulgar fortune-hunter in his secret resolve to win the hand of the heiress. He recognized no inequality of worldly gifts between them. He said to himself, "Whatever she may give me in money, I shall amply repay in worldly position if I succeed, and succeed I certainly shall. If I were as rich as Lord Westminster, and still cared about being Prime Minister, I should select her as the most fitting woman I have seen for a Prime Minister's wife."

It must be acknowledged that this sort of self-commune, if not that of a very ardent lover, is very much that of a sensible man

setting high value on himself, bent on achieving the prizes of a public career, and desirous of securing in his wife a woman who would adorn the station to which he confidently aspired. In fact, no one so able as Chillingly Gordon would ever have conceived the ambition of being Minister of England if, in all that, in private life, constitutes the English gentleman, he could be fairly subject to reproach.

He was but in public life what many a gentleman honest in private life has been before him, an ambitious, resolute egotist, by no means without personal affections, but holding them all subordinate to the objects of personal ambition, and with no more of other principle than that of expediency in reference to his own career, than would cover a silver penny. But expediency in itself he deemed the statesman's only rational principle. And to the consideration of expediency he brought a very unprejudiced intellect, quite fitted to decide whether the public opinion of a free and en-

lightened people was for turning St. Paul's Cathedral into an Agapemone or not.

During the summer weeks he had thus vouchsafed to the turfs and groves of Ex-mundham, Leopold Travers was not the only person whose good opinion Chillingly Gordon had ingratiated. He had won the warmest approbation from Mrs Campion. His conversation reminded her of that which she had enjoyed in the house of her departed spouse. In talking with Cecilia she was fond of contrasting him to Kenelm, not to the favour of the latter, whose humours she utterly failed to understand, and whom she pertinaciously described as "So affected." "A most superior young man Mr Gordon, so well informed, so sensible, above all, so natural." Such was her judgment upon the unavowed candidate to Cecilia's hand; and Mrs Campion required no avowal to divine the candidature. Even Lady Glenalvon had begun to take friendly interest in the fortunes of this promising young man. Most women can sympathize with youthful ambition. He

impressed her with a deep conviction of his abilities, and still more with respect for their concentration upon practical objects of power and renown. She too, like Mrs. Campion, began to draw comparisons unfavourable to Kenelm between the two cousins; the one who seemed so slothfully determined to hide his candle under a bushel, the other so honestly disposed to set his light before men. She felt also annoyed and angry that Kenelm was thus absenting himself from the paternal home at the very time of her first visit to it, and when he had so felicitous an opportunity of seeing more of the girl in whom he knew that Lady Glenalvon deemed he might win, if he would properly woo, the wife that would best suit him. So that when one day Mrs. Campion, walking through the gardens alone with Lady Glenalvon, while from the gardens into the park went Chillingly Gordon arm-in-arm with Leopold Travers, abruptly asked, "Don't you think that Mr. Gordon is smitten with Cecilia, though he, with his moderate fortune, does not dare to say so?"

And don't you think that any girl, if she were as rich as Cecilia will be, would be more proud of such a husband as Chillingly Gordon than of some silly Earl?"

Lady Glenalvon answered curtly, but somewhat sorrowfully—

"Yes."

After a pause, she added, "*There is* a man with whom I did once think she would have been happier than with any other. One man who ought to be dearer to me than Mr Gordon, for he saved the life of my son, and who, though perhaps less clever than Mr Gordon, still has a great deal of talent within him, which might come forth and make him—what shall I say?—a useful and distinguished member of society, if married to a girl so sure of raising any man she marries as Cecilia Travers. But if I am to renounce that hope, and look through the range of young men brought under my notice, I don't know one, putting aside consideration of rank and fortune, I should prefer for a clever daughter who went heart and soul with the

ambition of a clever man. But, Mrs Campion, I have not yet quite renounced my hope; and, unless I do, I yet think there is one man to whom I would rather give Cecilia, if she were my daughter."

Therewith Lady Glenalvon so decidedly broke off the subject of conversation, that Mrs Campion could not have renewed it without such a breach of the female etiquette of good breeding as Mrs Campion was the last person to adventure.

Lady Chillingly could not help being pleased with Gordon. He was light in hand, served to amuse her guests, and made up a rubber of whist in case of need.

There were two persons, however, with whom Gordon made no ground, viz., Parson John and Sir Peter. When Travers praised him one day, for the solidity of his parts and the soundness of his judgment, the Parson replied snappishly, "Yes, solid and sound as one of those tables you buy at a broker's; the thickness of the varnish hides the defects in the joints; the whole framework is

rickety." But when the Parson was indignantly urged to state the reason by which he arrived at so harsh a conclusion, he could only reply by an assertion which seemed to his questioner a declamatory burst of parsonic intolerance.

"Because," said Parson John, "he has no love for man, and no reverence for God. And no character is sound and solid which enlarges its surface at the expense of its supports."

On the other hand, the favour with which Sir Peter had at first regarded Gordon gradually vanished, in proportion as, acting on the hint Mivers had originally thrown out but did not deem it necessary to repeat, he watched the pains which the young man took to insinuate himself into the good graces of Mr Travers and Mrs Campion, and the artful and half-suppressed gallantry of his manner to the heiress.

Perhaps Gordon had not ventured thus "to feel his way" till after Mivers had departed; or perhaps Sir Peter's parental

anxiety rendered him, in this instance, a shrewder observer than was the man of the world, whose natural acuteness was, in matters of affection, not unfrequently rendered languid by his acquired philosophy of indifference.

More and more every day, every hour, of her sojourn beneath his roof, did Cecilia become dearer to Sir Peter, and stronger and stronger became his wish to secure her for his daughter-in-law. He was inexpressibly flattered by her preference for his company; ever at hand to share his customary walks, his kindly visits to the cottages of peasants, or the homesteads of petty tenants; wherein both were sure to hear many a simple anecdote of Master Kenelm in his childhood, anecdotes of whim or good nature, of considerate pity or reckless courage.

Throughout all these varieties of thought or feeling in the social circle around her, Lady Chillingly preserved the unmoved calm of her dignified position. A very good woman certainly, and very ladylike. No

one could detect a flaw in her character, or a fold awry in her flounce. She was only, like the gods of Epicurus, too good to trouble her serene existence with the cares of us simple mortals. Not that she was without a placid satisfaction in the tribute which the world laid upon her altars ; nor was she so supremely goddess-like as to soar above the household affections which humanity entails on the dwellers and denizens of earth. She liked her husband as much as most elderly wives like their elderly husbands. She bestowed upon Kenelm a liking somewhat more warm, and mingled with compassion. His eccentricities would have puzzled her, if she had allowed herself to be puzzled ; it troubled her less to pity them. She did not share her husband's desire for his union with Cecilia. She thought that her son would have a higher place in the county if he married Lady Jane, the Duke of Clanville's daughter ; and "that is what he ought to do," said Lady Chillingly to herself. She entertained none of the fear that had induced Sir Peter

to extract from Kenelm the promise not to pledge his hand before he had received his father's consent. That the son of Lady Chillingly should make a *mésalliance*, however crotchety he might be in other respects, was a thought that it would have so disturbed her to admit, that she did not admit it.

Such was the condition of things at Ex-mundham, when the lengthy communication of Kenelm reached Sir Peter's hands.

BOOK VIII.



CHAPTER I.

NEVER in his whole life had the mind of Sir Peter been so agitated as it was during, and after, the perusal of Kenelm's flighty composition. He had received it at the breakfast table, and, opening it eagerly, ran his eye hastily over the contents, till he very soon arrived at sentences which appalled him. Lady Chillingly, who was fortunately busied at the tea urn, did not observe the dismay on his countenance. It was visible only to Cecilia and to Gordon. Neither guessed who that letter was from.

"Not bad news, I hope," said Cecilia softly.

"Bad news," echoed Sir Peter. "No, my dear, no; a letter on business. It seems terribly long," and he thrust the packet into his pocket, muttering "see to it by-and-by."

"That slovenly farmer of yours, Mr Nostock, has failed, I suppose," said Mr Travers, looking up and observing a quiver on his host's lip. "I told you he would—a fine farm too. Let me choose you another tenant."

Sir Peter shook his head with a wan smile.

"Nostock will not fail. There have been six generations of Nostocks on the farm."

"So I should guess," said Travers drily.

"And—and," faltered Sir Peter, "if the last of the race fails, he must lean upon me, and—if one of the two break down—it shall not be—"

"Shall not be that cross-cropping block-head, my dear Sir Peter. This is carrying benevolence too far."

Here the tact and *savoir vivre* of Chillingly Gordon came to the rescue of the host. Possessing himself of the *Times* newspaper,

he uttered an exclamation of surprise, genuine or simulated, and read aloud an extract from the leading article, announcing an impending change in the Cabinet.

As soon as he could quit the breakfast-table, Sir Peter hurried into his library, and there gave himself up to the study of Kenelm's unwelcome communication. The task took him long, for he stopped at intervals, overcome by the struggle of his heart, now melted into sympathy with the passionate eloquence of a son hitherto so free from amorous romance, and now sorrowing for the ruin of his own cherished hopes. This uneducated country girl would never be such a helpmate to a man like Kenelm as would have been Cecilia Travers. At length, having finished the letter, he buried his head between his clasped hands, and tried hard to realize the situation that placed the father and son into such direct antagonism.

"But," he murmured, "after all it is the boy's happiness that must be consulted. If he will not be happy in my way, what right

have I to say that he shall not be happy in his?"

Just then Cecilia came softly into the room. She had acquired the privilege of entering his library at will, sometimes to choose a book of his recommendation, sometimes to direct and seal his letters—Sir Peter was grateful to any one who saved him an extra trouble—and sometimes, especially at this hour, to decoy him forth into his wonted constitutional walk.

He lifted his face at the sound of her approaching tread and her winning voice, and the face was so sad that the tears rushed to her eyes on seeing it. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and said pleadingly, "Dear Sir Peter, what is it—what is it?"

"Ah—ah, my dear," said Sir Peter, gathering up the scattered sheets of Kenelm's effusion with hurried, trembling hands. "Don't ask—don't talk of it; 'tis but one of the disappointments that all of us must undergo, when we invest our hopes in the uncertain will of others."

Then, observing that the tears were trickling down the girl's fair, pale cheeks, he took her hand in both his, kissed her forehead, and said, whisperingly, "Pretty one, how good you have been to me! Heaven bless you. What a wife you will be to some man!"

Thus saying, he shambled out of the room through the open casement. She followed him impulsively, wonderingly; but before she reached his side he turned round, waved his hand with a gently repelling gesture, and went his way alone through dense fir groves which had been planted in honour of Kenelm's birth.

CHAPTER II.

KENELM arrived at Exmundham just in time to dress for dinner. His arrival was not unexpected, for the morning after his father had received his communication, Sir Peter had said to Lady Chillingly "that he had heard from Kenelm to the effect that he might be down any day."

"Quite time he should come," said Lady Chillingly. "Have you his letter about you?"

"No, my dear Caroline. Of course he sends you his kindest love, poor fellow."

"Why poor fellow? Has he been ill?"

"No; but there seems to be something on his mind. If so, we must do what we can to relieve it. He is the best of sons, Caroline."

“I am sure I have nothing to say against him, except,” added her ladyship reflectively, “that I do wish he were a little more like other young men.”

“Hum—like Chillingly Gordon, for instance?”

“Well, yes; Mr Gordon is a remarkably well-bred, sensible young man. How different from that disagreeable, bearish father of his, who went to law with you!”

“Very different indeed, but with just as much of the Chillingly blood in him. How the Chillinglys ever gave birth to a Kenelm is a question much more puzzling.”

“Oh, my dear Sir Peter, don’t be metaphysical. You know how I hate puzzles.”

“And yet, Caroline, I have to thank you for a puzzle which I can never interpret by my brain. There are a great many puzzles in human nature which can only be interpreted by the heart.”

“Very true,” said Lady Chillingly. “I suppose Kenelm is to have his old room, just opposite to Mr Gordon’s.”

“Ay—ay, just opposite. Opposite they will be all their lives. Only think, Caroline, I have made a discovery.”

“Dear me ; I hope not. Your discoveries are generally very expensive, and bring us in contact with such very odd people.”

“This discovery shall not cost us a penny, and I don’t know any people so odd as not to comprehend it. Briefly it is this : To genius the first requisite is heart ; it is no requisite at all to talent. My dear Caroline, Gordon has as much talent as any young man I know, but he wants the first requisite of genius. I am not by any means sure that Kenelm has genius, but there is no doubt that he has the first requisite of genius—heart. Heart is a very perplexing, wayward, irrational thing ; and that perhaps accounts for the general incapacity to comprehend genius, while any fool can comprehend talent. My dear Caroline, you know that it is very seldom, not more than once in three years, that I presume to have a will of my own against a will of yours ; but should there come a

question in which our son's heart is concerned, then (speaking between ourselves) my will must govern yours."

"Sir Peter is growing more odd every day," said Lady Chillingly to herself when left alone. "But he does not mean ill, and there are worse husbands in the world."

Therewith she rang for her maid, gave requisite orders for the preparing of Kenelm's room, which had not been slept in for many months, and then consulted that functionary as to the adaptation of some dress of hers, too costly to be laid aside, to the style of some dress less costly which Lady Glenalvon had imported from Paris as *la dernière mode*.

On the very day on which Kenelm arrived at Exmundham, Chillingly Gordon had received this letter from Mr Gerard Danvers :

"DEAR GORDON, — In the ministerial changes announced as rumour in the public papers, and which you may accept as certain, that sweet little cherub * * * is to be sent

to sit up aloft and pray there for the life of poor Jack—viz., of the government he leaves below. In accepting the peerage, which I persuaded him to do * * * creates a vacancy for the borough of ——— just the place for you, far better in every way than Saxborough. * * * promises to recommend you to his committee. Come to town at once.

“Yours, &c.

“G. DANVERS.”

Gordon shewed this letter to Mr Travers, and, on receiving the hearty good wishes of that gentleman, said, with emotion partly genuine partly assumed, “You cannot guess all that the realization of your good wishes would be. Once in the House of Commons, and my motives for action are so strong that—do not think me very conceited if I count upon Parliamentary success.”

“My dear Gordon, I am as certain of your success as I am of my own existence.”

“Should I succeed—should the great prizes of public life be within my reach—

should I lift myself into a position that would warrant my presumption, do you think I could come to you and say, 'There is an object of ambition, dearer to me than power and office—the hope of attaining which was the strongest of all my motives of action? And in that hope shall I also have the good wishes of the father of Cecilia Travers?' ”

“My dear fellow, give me your hand; you speak manfully and candidly as a gentleman should speak. I answer in the same spirit. I don't pretend to say that I have not entertained views for Cecilia which included hereditary rank and established fortune in a suitor to her hand, though I never should have made them imperative conditions. I am neither potentate nor *parvenu* enough for that; and I can never forget ” (here every muscle in the man's face twitched) “that I myself married for love, and was so happy. How happy Heaven only knows! Still, if you had thus spoken a few weeks ago, I should not have replied very favourably to

your question. But now that I have seen so much of you, my answer is this: If you lose your election—if you don't come into Parliament at all, you have my good wishes all the same. If you win my daughter's heart, there is no man on whom I would more willingly bestow her hand. There she is, by herself too, in the garden. Go and talk to her."

Gordon hesitated. He knew too well that he had not won her heart, though he had no suspicion that it was given to another. And he was much too clever not to know also how much he hazards, who, in affairs of courtship, is premature.

"Ah!" he said, "I cannot express my gratitude for words so generous, encouragement so cheering. But I have never yet dared to utter to Miss Travers a word that would prepare her even to harbour a thought of me as a suitor. And I scarcely think I should have the courage to go through this election with the grief of her rejection on my heart."

“ Well, go in and win the election first ; meanwhile, at all events, take leave of Cecilia.”

Gordon left his friend, and joined Miss Travers, resolved not indeed to risk a formal declaration, but to sound his way to his chances of acceptance.

The interview was very brief. He did sound his way skilfully, and felt it very unsafe for his footsteps. The advantage of having gained the approval of the father was too great to be lost altogether, by one of these decided answers on the part of the daughter which allow of no appeal, especially to a poor gentleman who woos an heiress.

He returned to Travers, and said simply, “ I bear with me her good wishes as well as yours. That is all. I leave myself in your kind hands.”

Then he hurried away to take leave of his host and hostess, say a few significant words to the ally he had already gained in Mrs. Campion, and within an hour was on his

road to London, passing on his way the train that bore Kenelm to Exmundham. Gordon was in high spirits. At least he felt as certain of winning Cecilia as he did of winning his election.

"I have never yet failed in what I desired," said he to himself, "because I have ever taken pains not to fail."

The cause of Gordon's sudden departure created a great excitement in that quiet circle, shared by all except Cecilia and Sir Peter.

CHAPTER III.

KENELM did not see either father or mother till he appeared at dinner. Then he was seated next to Cecilia. There was but little conversation between the two; in fact, the prevalent subject of talk was general and engrossing, the interest in Chillingly Gordon's election; predictions of his success, of what he would do in Parliament. "Where," said Lady Glenalvon, "there is such a dearth of rising young men, that if he were only half as clever as he is he would be a gain."

"A gain to what?" asked Sir Peter testily. "To his country? about which I don't believe he cares a brass button."

To this assertion Leopold Travers replied

warmly, and was not less warmly backed by Mrs Champion.

“For my part,” said Lady Glenalvon, in conciliatory accents, “I think every able man in Parliament is a gain to the country ; and he may not serve his country less effectively because he does not boast of his love for it. The politicians I dread most are those so rampant in France now-a-days, the bawling patriots. When Sir Robert Walpole said, ‘All those men have their price,’ he pointed to the men who called themselves ‘patriots.’”

“Bravo !” cried Travers.

“Sir Robert Walpole showed his love for his country by corrupting it. There are many ways besides bribing for corrupting a country,” said Kenelm mildly, and that was Kenelm’s sole contribution to the general conversation.

It was not till the rest of the party had retired to rest, that the conference, longed for by Kenelm, dreaded by Sir Peter, took place in the library. It lasted deep into the

night; both parted with lightened hearts and a fonder affection for each other. Kenelm had drawn so charming a picture of the Fairy, and so thoroughly convinced Sir Peter that his own feelings towards her were those of no passing youthful fancy, but of that love which has its roots in the innermost heart, that though it was still with a sigh, a deep sigh, that he dismissed the thought of Cecilia, Sir Peter did dismiss it; and, taking comfort at last from the positive assurance that Lily was of gentle birth, and the fact that her name of Mordaunt was that of ancient and illustrious houses, said, with half a smile, "It might have been worse, my dear boy. I began to be afraid that, in spite of the teachings of Mivers and Welby, it was 'The Miller's Daughter,' after all. But we still have a difficult task to persuade your poor mother. In covering your first flight from our roof I unluckily put into her head the notion of Lady Jane, a duke's daughter, and the notion has never got out of it. That comes of fibbing."

“I count on Lady Glenalvon’s influence on my mother in support of your own,” said Kenelm. “If so accepted an oracle in the great world pronounce in my favour, and promise to present my wife at Court and bring her into fashion, I think that my mother will consent to allow us to reset the old family diamonds for her next re-appearance in London. And then, too, you can tell her that I will stand for the county. I will go into Parliament, and if I meet there our clever cousin, and find that he does not care a brass button for the country, take my word for it, I will lick him more easily than I licked Tom Bowles.”

“Tom Bowles! Who is he?—ah! I remember some letter of yours in which you spoke of a Bowles, whose favourite study was mankind, a moral philosopher.”

“Moral philosophers,” answered Kenelm, “have so muddled their brains with the alcohol of new ideas that their moral legs have become shaky, and the humane would rather help them to bed than give them a licking.

My Tom Bowles is a muscular Christian, who became no less muscular, but much more Christian, after he was licked."

And in this pleasant manner these two oddities settled their conference, and went up to bed with arms wrapt round each other's shoulder.

CHAPTER IV.

KENELM found it a much harder matter to win Lady Glenalvon to his side than he had anticipated. With the strong interest she had taken in Kenelm's future, she could not but revolt from the idea of his union with an obscure portionless girl whom he had only known a few weeks, and of whose very parentage he seemed to know nothing, save an assurance that she was his equal in birth. And, with the desire, which she had cherished almost as fondly as Sir Peter, that Kenelm might win a bride in every way so worthy of his choice as Cecilia Travers, she felt not less indignant than regretful at the overthrow of her plans.

At first, indeed, she was so provoked that

she would not listen to his pleadings. She broke away from him with a rudeness she had never exhibited to any one before, refused to grant him another interview in order to re-discuss the matter, and said that so far from using her influence in favour of his romantic folly, she would remonstrate well with Lady Chillingly and Sir Peter against yielding their assent to his "thus throwing himself away."

It was not till the third day after his arrival that, touched by the grave but haughty mournfulness of his countenance, she yielded to the arguments of Sir Peter in the course of a private conversation with that worthy baronet. Still it was reluctantly (she did not fulfil her threat of remonstrance with Lady Chillingly) that she conceded the point, that a son who, succeeding to the absolute fee simple of an estate, had volunteered the resettlement of it on terms singularly generous to both his parents, was entitled to some sacrifice of their inclinations on a question in which he deemed

his happiness vitally concerned; and that he was of age to choose for himself, independently of their consent, but for a previous promise extracted from him by his father, a promise which, rigidly construed, was not extended to Lady Chillingly, but confined to Sir Peter as the head of the family and master of the household. The father's consent was already given, and, if in his reverence for both parents Kenelm could not dispense with his mother's approval, surely it was the part of a true friend to remove every scruple from his conscience, and smooth away every obstacle to a love not to be condemned because it was disinterested.

After this conversation Lady Glenalvon sought Kenelm, found him gloomily musing on the banks of the trout stream, took his arm, led him into the sombre glades of the fir grove, and listened patiently to all he had to say. Even then her woman's heart was not won to his reasonings, until he said pathetically, "You thanked me once for

saving your son's life ; you said then that you could never repay me ; you can repay me tenfold. Could your son who is now, we trust, in heaven, look down and judge between us, do you think he would approve you if you refuse ?”

Then Lady Glenalvon wept, and took his hand, kissed his forehead as a mother might kiss it, and said, “ You triumph, I will go to Lady Chillingly at once. Marry her whom you so love, on one condition ; marry her from my house.”

Lady Glenalvon was not one of those women who serve a friend by halves. She knew well how to propitiate and reason down the apathetic temperament of Lady Chillingly ; she did not cease till that lady herself came into Kenelm's room, and said very quietly,

“ So you are going to propose to Miss Mordaunt, the Warwickshire Mordaunts I suppose. Lady Glenalvon says she is a very lovely girl, and will stay with her before the wedding. And, as the young

lady is an orphan, Lady Glenalvon's uncle the Duke, who is connected with the eldest branch of the Mordaunts, will give her away. It will be a very brilliant affair. I am sure I wish you happy, it is time you should have sown your wild oats."

Two days after the consent thus formally given, Kenelm quitted Exmundham. Sir Peter would have accompanied him to pay his respects to the intended, but the agitation he had gone through brought on a sharp twinge of the gout, which consigned his feet to flannels.

After Kenelm had gone, Lady Glenalvon went into Cecilia's room. Cecilia was seated very desolately by the open window; she had detected that something of an anxious and painful nature had been weighing upon the minds of father and son, and had connected it with the letter which had so disturbed the even mind of Sir Peter; but she did not divine what the something was, and if mortified by a certain reserve, more distant than heretofore, which had characterized

Kenelm's manner towards herself, the mortification was less sensibly felt than a tender sympathy for the sadness she had observed on his face, and yearned to soothe. His reserve had, however, made her own manner more reserved than of old, for which she was now rather chiding herself than reproaching him.

Lady Glenalvon put her arms round Cecilia's neck and kissed her, whispering, "That man has so disappointed me, he is so unworthy of the happiness I had once hoped for him!"

"Whom do you speak of?" murmured Cecilia, turning very pale.

"Kenelm Chillingly. It seems that he has conceived a fancy for some penniless girl whom he has met in his wanderings, has come here to get the consent of his parents to propose to her, has obtained their consent, and is gone to propose."

Cecilia remained silent for a moment with her eyes closed, then she said, "He is worthy of all happiness, and he would never make

an unworthy choice. Heaven bless him—and—and—" She would have added "his bride," but her lips refused to utter the word bride.

"Cousin Gordon is worth ten of him," cried Lady Glenalvon indignantly.

She had served Kenelm, but she had not forgiven him.

CHAPTER V.

KENELM slept in London that night, and, the next day being singularly fine for an English summer, he resolved to go to Moleswick on foot. He had no need this time to encumber himself with a knapsack; he had left sufficient change of dress in his lodgings at Cromwell Lodge.

It was towards the evening when he found himself in one of the prettiest rural villages by which

“Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.”

It was not in the direct road from London to Moleswick, but it was a pleasanter way for a pedestrian. And when, quitting the long street of the sultry village, he came to

the shelving margin of the river, he was glad to rest awhile, enjoy the cool of the rippling waters, and listen to their placid murmurs amid the rushes in the bordering shallows. He had ample time before him. His rambles while at Cromwell Lodge had made him familiar with the district for miles round Moleswick, and he knew that a footpath through the fields at the right would lead him, in less than an hour, to the side of the tributary brook on which Cromwell Lodge was placed, opposite the wooden bridge which conducted to Grasmere and Moleswick.

To one who loves the romance of history, English history, the whole course of the Thames is full of charm. Ah! could I go back to the days in which younger generations than that of Kenelm Chillingly were unborn, when every wave of the Rhine spoke of history and romance to me, what fairies should meet on thy banks, O thou, our own Father Thames! Perhaps some day a German pilgrim may repay tenfold

to thee the tribute rendered by the English kinsman to the Father Rhine.

Listening to the whispers of the reeds, Kenelm Chillingly felt the haunting influence of the legendary stream. Many a poetic incident or tradition in antique chronicle, many a votive rhyme in song, dear to forefathers whose very names have become a poetry to us, thronged dimly and confusedly back to his memory, which had little cared to retain such graceful trinkets in the treasure-house of love. But everything that, from childhood upward, connects itself with romance—revives with yet fresher bloom in the memories of him who loves.

And to this man, through the first perilous season of youth, so abnormally safe from youth's most wonted peril,—to this would-be pupil of realism, this learned adept in the schools of a Welby or a Mivers,—to this man, Love came at last as with the fatal powers of the fabled Cytherèa; and with that love all the realisms of life became ideals, all

the stern lines of our commonplace destinies undulating into curves of beauty, all the trite sounds of our everyday life attuned into delicacies of song. How full of sanguine yet dreamy bliss was his heart,—and seemed his future,—in the gentle breeze and the softened glow of that summer eve! He should see Lily the next morn, and his lips were now free to say all that they had as yet suppressed.

Suddenly he was roused from the half-awake, half-asleep, happiness that belongs to the moments in which we transport ourselves into Elysium, by the carol of a voice more loudly joyous than that of his own heart—

“Singing—singing,
Lustily singing,
Down the road, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Nierestein.”

Kenelm turned his head so quickly that he frightened Max, who had for the last minute been standing behind him inquisitively with one paw raised, and sniffing, in

some doubt whether he recognized an old acquaintance ; but at Kenelm's quick movement the animal broke into a nervous bark, and ran back to his master.

The Minstrel, little heeding the figure reclined on the bank, would have passed on with his light tread and his cheery carol, but Kenelm rose to his feet, and holding out his hand, said, "I hope you don't share Max's alarm at meeting me again?"

"Ah, my young philosopher, is it indeed you?"

"If I am to be designated a philosopher it is certainly not I. And, honestly speaking, I am not the same. I, who spent that pleasant day with you among the fields round Luscombe two years ago"—

"Or who advised me at Tor Hadham to string my lyre to the praise of a beefsteak. I too am not quite the same, I whose dog presented you with the begging-tray."

"Yet you still go through the world singing."

"Even that vagrant singing time is pretty

well over. But I disturbed you from your repose. I would rather share it; you are probably not going my way, and as I am in no hurry, I should not like to lose the opportunity chance has so happily given me of renewing acquaintance with one who has often been present to my thoughts since we last met." Thus saying, the Minstrel stretched himself at ease on the bank, and Kenelm followed his example.

There certainly was a change in the owner of the dog with the begging tray, a change in costume, in countenance, in that indescribable self-evidence which we call "manner." The costume was not that Bohemian attire in which Kenelm had first encountered the Wandering Minstrel, nor the studied, more graceful garb, which so well became his shapely form, during his visit to Luscombe. It was now neatly simple, the cool and quiet summer dress any English gentleman might adopt in a long rural walk. And as he uncovered his head to court the cooling breeze, there was a graver dignity

in the man's handsome Rubens-like face, a line of more concentrated thought in the spacious forehead, a thread or two of grey shimmering here and there through the thick auburn curls of hair and beard. And in his manner, though still very frank, there was just perceptible a sort of self-assertion, not offensive, but manly ; such as does not misbecome one of maturer years, and of some established position, addressing another man much younger than himself, who in all probability has achieved no position at all beyond that which the accident of birth might assign to him.

"Yes," said the Minstrel, with a half-suppressed sigh, "the last year of my vagrant holidays has come to its close. I recollect that the first day we met by the roadside fountain, I advised you to do like me, seek amusement and adventure as a foot traveller. Now, seeing you, evidently a gentleman by education and birth, still a foot traveller, I feel as if I ought to say, 'You have had enough of such experience ;

vagabond life has its perils as well as charms ; cease it and settle down.' ”

“ I think of doing so,” replied Kenelm laconically.

“ In a profession ?—army—law—medicine ? ”

“ No.”

“ Ah, in marriage then. Right ; give me your hand on that. So a petticoat indeed has at last found its charm for you in the actual world as well as on the canvas of a picture ? ”

“ I conclude,” said Kenelm,—evading any direct notice of that playful taunt,—“ I conclude from your remark that it is in marriage *you* are about to settle down.”

“ Ay, could I have done so before I should have been saved from many errors, and been many years nearer to the goal which dazzled my sight through the haze of my boyish dreams.”

“ What is that goal—the grave ? ”

“ The grave ! That which allows of no grave—Fame.”

“ I see—despite of what you just now

said—you still mean to go through the world seeking a poet's fame."

"Alas! I resign that fancy," said the Minstrel, with another half sigh. "It was not indeed wholly, but in great part the hope of the poet's fame that made me a truant in the way to that which destiny and such few gifts as nature conceded to me, marked out for my proper and only goal. But what a strange, delusive Will-o'-the-Wisp the love of verse-making is! How rarely a man of good sense deceives himself as to other things for which he is fitted, in which he can succeed; but let him once drink into his being the charm of verse making, how the glamour of the charm bewitches his understanding! how long it is before he can believe that the world will not take his word for it, when he cries out to sun, moon, and stars, 'I, too, am a poet.' And with what agonies, as if at the wrench of soul from life, he resigns himself at last to the conviction, that whether he or the world be right, it comes to the same thing. Who can

plead his cause before a court that will not give him a hearing?"

It was with an emotion so passionately strong, and so intensely painful, that the owner of the dog with the begging-tray thus spoke, that Kenelm felt, through sympathy, as if he himself were torn asunder by the wrench of life from soul. But then, Kenelm was a mortal so eccentric, that, if a single acute suffering endured by a fellow-mortal could be brought before the evidence of his senses, I doubt whether he would not have suffered as much as that fellow-mortal. So that, though if there were a thing in the world which Kenelm Chillingly would care not to do, it was verse-making, his mind involuntarily hastened to the arguments by which he could best mitigate the pang of the verse-maker.

Quoth he—"According to my very scanty reading, you share the love of verse-making with men the most illustrious in careers which have achieved the goal of fame. It must, then, be a very noble love—Augustus,

Pollio, Varius, Mæcenas—the greatest statesmen of their day ; they were verse-makers. Cardinal Richelieu was a verse-maker ; Walter Raleigh and Philip Sidney ; Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Warren Hastings, Canning—even the grave William Pitt ; all were verse-makers. Verse-making did not retard—no doubt the qualities essential to verse-making accelerated—their race to the goal of fame. What great painters have been verse-makers ! Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Salvator Rosa ”—and Heaven knows how many other great names Kenelm Chillingly might have proceeded to add to his list, if the Minstrel had not here interposed.

“ What ! all those mighty painters were verse-makers ? ”

“ Verse-makers so good, especially Michael Angelo—the greatest painter of all—that they would have had the fame of poets, if, unfortunately for that goal of fame, their glory in the sister art of painting did not outshine it. But, when you give to your

gift of song the modest title of verse-making, permit me to observe that your gift is perfectly distinct from that of the verse-maker. Your gift, whatever it may be, could not exist without some sympathy with the non-verse-making human heart. No doubt, in your foot travels, you have acquired not only observant intimacy with external nature in the shifting hues at each hour of a distant mountain, in the lengthening shadows which yon sunset casts on the waters at our feet, in the habits of the thrush dropped fearlessly close beside me, in that turf moistened by its neighbourhood to those dripping rushes, all of which I could describe no less accurately than you—as a Peter Bell might describe them no less accurately than a William Wordsworth. But in such songs of yours as you have permitted me to hear, you seem to have escaped out of that elementary accident of the poet's art, and to touch, no matter how slightly, on the only lasting interest which the universal heart of man can have in the song of the poet, viz., in the

sound which the poet's individual sympathy draws forth from the latent chords in that universal heart. As for what you call 'the world,' what is it more than the fashion of the present day? How far the judgment of that is worth a poet's pain I can't pretend to say. But of one thing I am sure, that while I could as easily square the circle as compose a simple couplet addressed to the heart of a simple audience with sufficient felicity to decoy their praises into Max's begging-tray, I could spin out by the yard the sort of verse-making which characterizes the fashion of the present day."

Much flattered, and not a little amused, the Wandering Minstrel turned his bright countenance, no longer dimmed by a cloud, towards that of his lazily reclined consoler, and answered gaily :

" You say that you could spin out by the yard verses in the fashion of the present day. I wish you would give me a specimen of your skill in that handiwork."

" Very well ; on one condition, that you

will repay my trouble by a specimen of your own verses, not in the fashion of the present day,—something which I can construe. I defy you to construe mine.”

“Agreed.”

“Well then, let us take it for granted that this is the Augustan age of English poetry, and that the English language is dead, like the Latin. Suppose I am writing for a prize medal, in English, as I wrote at college for a prize medal, in Latin; of course, I shall be successful in proportion as I introduce the verbal elegances peculiar to our Augustan age, and also catch the prevailing poetic characteristic of that classical epoch.

“Now I think that every observant critic will admit that the striking distinctions of the poetry most in the fashion of the present day, viz., of the Augustan age, are—first, a selection of such verbal elegances as would have been most repulsive to the barbaric taste of the preceding century, and—secondly, a very lofty disdain of all prosaic condescen-

sions to common sense, and an elaborate cultivation of that element of the sublime which Mr. Burke defines under the head of obscurity.

"These premises conceded, I will only ask you to choose the metre. Blank verse is very much in fashion just now."

"Pooh,—blank verse indeed—I am not going so to free your experiment from the difficulties of rhyme."

"It is all one to me," said Kenelm, yawning. "Rhyme be it: Heroic, or lyrical?"

"Heroics are old-fashioned; but the Chaucer couplet, as brought to perfection by our modern poets, I think the best adapted to dainty leaves and uncrackable nuts. I accept the modern Chaucerian."

"The subject?"

"Oh, never trouble yourself about that. By whatever title your Augustan verse-maker labels his poem, his genius, like Pindar's, disdains to be cramped by the subject. Listen, and don't suffer Max to howl, if he can help it. Here goes."

And in an affected, but emphatic, sing-song, Kenelm began—

“In Attica the gentle Pythias dwelt.
Youthful he was, and passing rich: he felt
As if nor youth nor riches could suffice
For bliss. Dark-eyed Sophronia was a nice
Girl: and one summer day, when Neptune drove
His sea-car slowly, and the olive grove
That skirts Ilissus, to thy shell, Harmonia,
Rippled, he said ‘I love thee’ to Sophronia.
Crocus and iris, when they heard him, wagg’d
Their pretty heads in glee: the honey-bagg’d
Bees became altars: and the forest dove
Her plumage smooth’d. Such is the charm of love.
Of this sweet story do ye long for more?
Wait till I publish it in volumes four;
Which certain critics, my good friends, will cry
Up beyond Chaucer. Take their word for’t. I
Say ‘Trust them: but not read,—or you’ll not
buy.’”

“You have certainly kept your word,” said the Minstrel laughing. “And if this be the Augustan age, and the English were a dead language, you deserve to win the prize medal.”

“You flatter me,” said Kenelm modestly. But if I, who never before strung two rhymes

together, can improvise so readily in the style of the present day, why should not a practical rhymester like yourself dash off at a sitting a volume or so in the same style ; disguising completely the verbal elegances borrowed, adding to the delicacies of the rhyme by the frequent introduction of a line that will not scan, and towering yet more into the sublime by becoming yet more unintelligible. Do that, and I promise you the most glowing panegric in 'The Londoner,' for I will write it myself."

" 'The Londoner ! ' " exclaimed the Minstrel, with an angry flush on his cheek and brow. " My bitter, relentless enemy."

" I fear, then, you have as little studied the critical press of the Augustan age as you have imbued your Muse with the classical spirit of its verse. For the art of writing a man must cultivate himself. The art of being reviewed consists in cultivating the acquaintance of reviewers. In the Augustan age criticism is cliquism. Belong to a clique, and you are Horace or Tibullus. Belong to

no clique, and, of course, you are Bavius or Mævius. 'The Londoner' is the enemy of no man—it holds all men in equal contempt. But as, in order to amuse, it must abuse, it compensates the praise it is compelled to bestow upon the members of its clique by heaping additional scorn upon all who are cliqueless. Hit him hard, he has no friends."

"Ah," said the Minstrel, "I believe that there is much truth in what you say. I never had a friend among the cliques. And Heaven knows with what pertinacity those from whom I, in utter ignorance of the rules which govern the so-called organs of opinion, had hoped, in my time of struggle, for a little sympathy,—a kindly encouragement,—have combined to crush me down. They succeeded long. But at last I venture to hope that I am beating them. Happily, Nature endowed me with a sanguine, joyous, elastic temperament. He who never despairs seldom completely fails."

This speech rather perplexed Kenelm, for had not the Minstrel declared that his sing-

ing days were over, that he had decided on the renunciation of verse-making? What other path to fame, from which the critics had not been able to exclude his steps, was he, then, now pursuing? he whom Kenelm had assumed to belong to some commercial money-making firm. No doubt some less difficult prose-track; probably a novel. Everybody writes novels now-a-days, and as the public will read novels without being told to do so, and will not read poetry unless they are told that they ought, possibly novels are not quite so much at the mercy of cliques, as are the poems of our Augustan age.

However, Kenelm did not think of seeking for further confidence on that score. His mind at that moment, not unnaturally, wandered from books and critics to love and wedlock.

"Our talk," said he, "has digressed into fretful courses—permit me to return to the starting-point. You are going to settle down into the peace of home. A peaceful home is like a good conscience. The rains without do not pierce its roof, the winds

without do not shake its walls. If not an impertinent question, is it long since you have known your intended bride?"

"Yes, very long."

"And always loved her?"

"Always, from her infancy. Out of all womankind, she was designed to be my life's playmate, and my soul's purifier. I know not what might have become of me, if the thought of her had not walked beside me, as my guardian angel. For, like many vagrants from the beaten high-roads of the world, there is in my nature something of that lawlessness which belongs to high animal spirits, to the zest of adventure, and the warm blood which runs into song, chiefly because song is the voice of a joy. And, no doubt, when I look back on the past years I must own that I have too often been led astray from the objects set before my reason, and cherished at my heart, by erring impulse or wanton fancy."

"Petticoat interest, I presume," interposed Kenelm drily.

"I wish I could honestly answer 'No,'"

said the Minstrel, colouring high. "But from the worst, from all that would have permanently blasted the career to which I intrust my fortunes, all that would have rendered me unworthy of the pure love that now, I trust, awaits and crowns my dreams of happiness, I have been saved by the haunting smile in a sinless infantine face. Only once was I in great peril—that hour of peril I recall with a shudder. It was at Luscombe."

"At Luscombe!"

"In the temptation of a terrible crime I thought I heard a voice say: 'Mischief! Remember the little child.' In that super-vention which is so readily accepted as a divine warning, when the imagination is morbidly excited, and when the conscience, though lulled asleep for a moment, is still asleep so lightly that the sigh of a breeze, the fall of a leaf, can awake it with a start of terror, I took the voice for that of my guardian angel. Thinking over it later, and coupling the voice with the moral of those weird lines you repeated to me so

appositely the next day, I conclude that I am not mistaken when I say it was from your lips that the voice which preserved me came."

"I confess the impertinence—you pardon it!"

The Minstrel seized Kenelm's hand and pressed it earnestly.

"Pardon it! Oh, could you but guess what cause I have to be grateful, everlastingly grateful! That sudden cry, the remorse and horror of my own self that it struck into me—deepened by those rugged lines which the next day made me shrink in dismay from 'the face of my darling sin'! Then came the turning-point of my life. From that day, the lawless vagabond within me was killed. I mean not, indeed, the love of nature and of song which had first allured the vagabond, but the hatred of steadfast habits and of serious work—*that* was killed. I no longer trifled with my calling, I took to it as a serious duty. And when I saw her, whom Fate has reserved and reared for my bride, her face was no longer in my eyes

that of the playful child; the soul of the woman was dawning into it. It is but two years since that day, to me so eventful. Yet my fortunes are now secured. And if fame be not established, I am at last in a position which warrants my saying to her I love, 'The time has come when, without fear for thy future, I can ask thee to be mine.'"

The man spoke with so fervent a passion that Kenelm silently left him to recover his wonted self-possession,—not unwilling to be silent—not unwilling, in the softness of the hour, passing from roseate sunset into starry twilight, to murmur to himself, "And the time, too, has come for me!"

After a few moments the Minstrel resumed lightly and cheerily:

"Sir, your turn—pray have you long known—judging by our former conversation, you cannot have long loved—the lady whom you have wooed and won?"

As Kenelm had neither as yet wooed nor won the lady in question, and did not deem it necessary to enter into any details on the

subject of love particular to himself, he replied by a general observation—

“It seems to me that the coming of love is like the coming of spring—the date is not to be reckoned by the calendar. It may be slow and gradual; it may be quick and sudden. But in the morning, when we wake and recognize a change in the world without, verdure on the trees, blossoms on the sward, warmth in the sunshine, music in the air, then we say Spring has come!”

“I like your illustration. And if it be an idle question to ask a lover how long he has known the beloved one, so it is almost as idle to ask if she be not beautiful. He cannot but see in her face the beauty she has given to the world without.”

“True; and that thought is poetic enough to make me remind you that I favoured you with the maiden specimen of my verse-making on condition that you repaid me by a specimen of your own practical skill in the art. And I claim the right to suggest the theme. Let it be——”

“Of a beef-steak?”

“Tush, you have worn out that tasteless joke at my expense. The theme must be of love, and if you could improvise a stanza or two expressive of the idea you just uttered I shall listen with yet more pleased attention.”

“Alas! I am no improvisatore. Yet I will avenge myself on your former neglect of my craft by chanting to you a trifle somewhat in unison with the thought you ask me to versify, but which you would not stay to hear at Tor Hadham (though you did drop a shilling into Max’s tray)—it was one of the songs I sang that evening, and it was not ill received by my humble audience.

THE BEAUTY OF THE MISTRESS IS IN THE LOVER’S EYE.

“Is she not pretty, my Mabel May?

Nobody ever yet called her so.

Are not her lineaments faultless, say?

If I must answer you plainly—No.

“Joy to believe that the maid I love

None but myself as she is can see;

Joy that she steals from her Heaven above,

And is only revealed on this earth to me!”

As soon as he had finished this very artless ditty, the Minstrel rose and said :

“ Now I must bid you good-bye. My way lies through those meadows, and yours, no doubt, along the high-road.”

“ Not so. Permit me to accompany you. I have a lodging not far from hence, to which the path through the fields is the shortest way.”

The Minstrel turned a somewhat surprised and somewhat inquisitive look towards Kenelm. But feeling, perhaps, that having withheld from his fellow traveller all confidence as to his own name and attributes, he had no right to ask any confidence from that gentleman not voluntarily made to him, he courteously said “ that he wished the way were longer, since it would be so pleasantly halved,” and strode forth at a brisk pace.

The twilight was now closing into the brightness of a starry summer night, and the solitude of the fields was unbroken. Both these men, walking side by side, felt supremely happy. But happiness is like

wine; its effect differing with the differing temperaments on which it acts. In this case garrulous and somewhat vaunting with the one man, warm-coloured, sensuous, impressionable to the influences of external nature, as an *Æolian* harp to the rise or fall of a passing wind; and, with the other man, taciturn and somewhat modestly expressed, saturnine, meditative, not indeed dull to the influences of external nature, but deeming them of no value, save where they passed out of the domain of the sensuous into that of the intellectual, and the soul of man dictated to the soul-less nature its own questions and its own replies.

The Minstrel took the talk on himself, and the talk charmed his listener. It became so really eloquent in the tones of its utterance, in the frank play of its delivery, that I could no more adequately describe it than a reporter, however faithful to every word a true orator may say, can describe that which, apart from all words, belongs to the presence of the orator himself.

Not, then, venturing to report the language of this singular itinerant, I content myself with saying that the substance of it was of the nature on which it is said most men can be eloquent: it was personal to himself. He spoke of aspirations towards the achievement of a name, dating back to the dawn of memory; of early obstacles in lowly birth, stinted fortunes; of a sudden opening to his ambition, while yet in boyhood, through the generous favour of a rich man, who said, "The child has genius, I will give it the discipline of culture, one day it shall repay to the world what it owes to me;" of studies passionately begun, earnestly pursued, and mournfully suspended in early youth. He did not say how or wherefore: he rushed on to dwell upon the struggles for a livelihood for himself and those dependent on him; how in such struggles he was compelled to divert toil and energy from the systematic pursuit of the object he had once set before him; the necessities for money were too urgent to

be postponed to the visions of fame. "But even," he exclaimed passionately, "even in such hasty and crude manifestations of what is within me, as circumstances limited my powers, I know that I ought to have found from those who profess to be authoritative judges the encouragement of praise. How much better, then, I should have done if I had found it! How a little praise warms out of a man the good that is in him, and the sneer of a contempt which he feels to be unjust chills the ardour to excel! However, I forced my way, so far as was then most essential to me, the sufficing bread-maker for those I loved; and in my holidays of song and ramble I found a delight that atoned for all the rest. But still the desire of fame, once conceived in childhood, once nourished through youth, never dies but in our grave. Foot and hoof may tread it down, bud, leaf, stalk; its root is too deep below the surface for them to reach, and year after year stalk and leaf and bud re-emerge. Love may depart from our

mortal life ; we console ourselves—the beloved will be reunited to us in the life to come. But if he who sets his heart on fame loses it in this life, what can console him ?”

“Did you not say a little while ago that fame allowed of no grave ?”

“True ; but if we do not achieve it before we ourselves are in the grave, what comfort can it give to us ? Love ascends to heaven, to which we hope ourselves to ascend ; but fame remains on the earth, which we shall never again revisit. And it is because fame is earth-born that the desire for it is the most lasting, the regret for the want of it the most bitter, to the child of earth. But I shall achieve it now ; it is already in my grasp.”

By this time the travellers had arrived at the brook, facing the wooden bridge beside Cromwell Lodge.

Here the Minstrel halted ; and Kenelm, with a certain tremble in his voice, said, “Is it not time that we should make ourselves known to each other by name ? I have no

longer any cause to conceal mine, indeed I never had any cause stronger than whim—Kenelm Chillingly, the only son of Sir Peter, of Exmundham, ——shire.”

“I wish your father joy of so clever a son,” said the Minstrel with his wonted urbanity. “You already know enough of me to be aware that I am of much humbler birth and station than you; but if you chance to have visited the exhibition of the Royal Academy this year—ah! I understand that start—you might have recognized a picture of which you have seen the rudimentary sketch, ‘The girl with the flower ball,’ one of three pictures very severely handled by ‘The Londoner,’ but, in spite of that potent enemy, ensuring fortune and promising fame to the Wandering Minstrel whose name, if the sight of the pictures had induced you to inquire into that, you would have found to be Walter Melville. Next January I hope, thanks to that picture, to add ‘Associate of the Royal Academy.’ The public will not let them keep me out of

it, in spite of 'The Londoner.' You are probably an expected guest at one of the more imposing villas from which we see the distant lights. I am going to a very humble cottage, in which henceforth I hope to find my established home. I am there now only for a few days, but pray let me welcome you there before I leave. The cottage is called Grasmere."

CHAPTER VI.

THE Minstrel gave a cordial parting shake of the hand to the fellow-traveller whom he had advised to settle down, not noticing how very cold had become the hand in his own genial grasp. Lightly he passed over the wooden bridge, preceded by Max, and merrily, when he had gained the other side of the bridge, came upon Kenelm's ear, through the hush of the luminous night, the verse of the uncompleted love song :

“Singing—singing,
Lustily singing.

Down the road with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Nierestein.”

Love song, uncompleted—why uncompleted ?
It was not given to Kenelm to divine the

why. It was a love song versifying one of the prettiest fairy tales in the world, which was a great favourite with Lily, and which Lion had promised Lily to versify, but only to complete it in her presence, and to her perfect satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII.

IF I could not venture to place upon paper the exact words of an eloquent coveter of fame, the earth-born, still less can I dare to place upon paper all that passed through the voiceless heart of a coveter of love, the heaven-born.

From the hour in which Kenelm Chillingly had parted from Walter Melville until somewhere between sunrise and noon the next day, the summer joyousness of that external nature which does now and then, though, for the most part, deceitfully, address to the soul of man questions and answers all her soul-less own, laughed away the gloom of his misgivings.

No doubt this Walter Melville was the

beloved guardian of Lily; no doubt it was Lily whom he designated as reserved and reared to become his bride. But on that question Lily herself had the sovereign voice. It remained yet to be seen whether Kenelm had deceived himself in the belief that had made the world so beautiful to him since the hour of their last parting. At all events it was due to her, due even to his rival, to assert his own claim to her choice. And the more he recalled all that Lily had ever said to him of her guardian, so openly, so frankly, proclaiming affection, admiration, gratitude, the more convincingly his reasonings allayed his fears, whispering, "So might a child speak of a parent: not so does the maiden speak of the man she loves; she can scarcely trust herself to praise."

★ In fine, it was not in despondent mood, nor with dejected looks, that, a little before noon, Kenelm crossed the bridge and re-entered the enchanted land of Grasmere. In answer to his inquiries, the servant who opened the door said that neither Mr Mel-

ville nor Miss Mordaunt were at home ; they had but just gone out together for a walk. He was about to turn back, when Mrs Cameron came into the hall, and, rather by gesture than words, invited him to enter. Kenelm followed her into the drawing-room, taking his seat beside her. He was about to speak, when she interrupted him in a tone of voice so unlike its usual languor, so keen, so sharp, that it sounded like a cry of distress.

“I was just about to come to you. Happily, however, you find me alone, and what may pass between us will be soon over. But first tell me—you have seen your parents ; you have asked their consent to wed a girl such as I described ; tell me, oh tell me that that consent is refused !”

“On the contrary, I am here with their full permission to ask the hand of your niece.”

Mrs Cameron sank back in her chair, rocking herself to and fro in the posture of a person in great pain.

“I feared that. Walter said he had met you last evening; that you, like himself, entertained the thought of marriage. You, of course, when you learnt his name, must have known with whom his thought was connected. Happily, he could not divine what was the choice to which your youthful fancy had been so blindly led.”

“My dear Mrs Cameron,” said Kenelm very mildly, but very firmly, “you were aware of the purpose for which I left Moleswick a few days ago, and it seems to me that you might have forestalled my intention, the intention which brings me thus early to your house. I come to say to Miss Mor-daunt’s guardian, ‘I ask the hand of your ward. If you also woo her, I have a very noble rival. With both of us no consideration for our own happiness can be comparable to the duty of consulting hers. Let her choose between the two.’”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Mrs Cameron; “impossible! You know not what you say; know not, guess not, how sacred are

the claims of Walter Melville to all that the orphan whom he has protected from her very birth can give him in return. She has no right to a preference for another; her heart is too grateful to admit of one. If the choice were given to her between him and you, it is he whom she would choose. Solemnly I assure you of this. Do not, then, subject her to the pain of such a choice. Suppose, if you will, that you had attracted her fancy, and that now you proclaimed your love and urged your suit, she would not, must not, the less reject your hand, but you might cloud her happiness in accepting Melville's. Be generous. Conquer your own fancy; it can be but a passing one. Speak not to her, nor to Mr Melville, of a wish which can never be realised. Go hence, silently, and at once."

The words and the manner of the pale imploring woman struck a vague awe into the heart of her listener. But he did not the less resolutely answer, "I cannot obey you. It seems to me that my honour com-

mands me to prove to your niece that, if I mistook the nature of her feelings towards me, I did not, by word or look, lead her to believe mine towards herself were less in earnest than they are; and it seems scarcely less honourable towards my worthy rival to endanger his own future happiness, should he discover later that his bride would have been happier with another. Why be so mysteriously apprehensive? If, as you say, with such apparent conviction, there is no doubt of your niece's preference for another, at a word from her own lips I depart, and you will see me no more. But that word must be said by her; and if you will not permit me to ask for it in your own house, I will take my chance of finding her now, on her walk with Mr Melville; and, could he deny me the right to speak to her alone, that which I would say can be said in his presence. Ah! madam, have you no mercy for the heart that you so needlessly torture? If I must bear the worst, let me learn it, and at once."

“Learn it, then, from my lips,” said Mrs Cameron, speaking with voice unnaturally calm, and features rigidly set into stern composure. “And I place the secret you wring from me under the seal of that honour, which you so vauntingly make your excuse for imperilling the peace of the home I ought never to have suffered you to enter. An honest couple, of humble station and narrow means, had an only son, who evinced in early childhood talents so remarkable that they attracted the notice of the father’s employer, a rich man of very benevolent heart and very cultivated taste. He sent the child, at his expense, to a first-rate commercial school, meaning to provide for him later in his own firm. The rich man was the head partner of an eminent bank; but very infirm health, and tastes much estranged from business, had induced him to retire from all active share in the firm, the management of which was confined to a son whom he idolized. But the talents of the *protégé* he had sent to school, there took so

passionate a direction towards art, and estranged from trade; and his designs in drawing when shown to connoisseurs, were deemed so promising of future excellence; that the patron changed his original intention, entered him as a pupil in the studio of a distinguished French painter, and afterwards bade him perfect his taste by the study of Italian and Flemish masterpieces.

“He was still abroad, when—” here Mrs Cameron stopped, with visible effort, suppressed a sob, and went on, whisperingly, through teeth clenched together—“when a thunderbolt fell on the house of the patron, shattering his fortunes, blasting his name. The son, unknown to the father, had been decoyed into speculations, which proved unfortunate; the loss might have been easily retrieved in the first instance, unhappily he took the wrong course to retrieve it, and launched into new hazards. I must be brief. One day the world was startled by the news that a firm, famed for its supposed wealth and solidity, was bank-

rupt. Dishonesty, was alleged, was proved, not against the father,—he went forth from the trial, censured indeed for neglect, not condemned for fraud, but a penniless pauper. The—son—the son—the idolized son—was removed from the prisoner's dock, a convicted felon, sentenced to penal servitude. Escaped that sentence by—by—you guess—you guess. How could he escape except through death?—death by his own guilty deed."

Almost as much overpowered by emotion as Mrs Cameron herself, Kenelm covered his bended face with one hand, stretching out the other blindly to clasp her own, but she would not take it.

A dreary foreboding. Again before his eyes rose the old grey tower—again in his ears thrilled the tragic tale of the Fletwodes. What was yet left untold held the young man in spell-bound silence. Mrs Cameron resumed—

"I said the father was a penniless pauper; he died lingeringly bed-ridden. But one

faithful friend did not desert that bed; the youth to whose genius his wealth had ministered. He had come from abroad with some modest savings from the sale of copies or sketches made in Florence. These savings kept a roof over the heads of the old man and the two helpless broken-hearted women—paupers like himself, — his own daughter and his son's widow. When the savings were gone, the young man stooped from his destined calling, found employment somehow, no matter how alien to his tastes, and these three whom his toil supported never wanted a home or food. Well, a few weeks after her husband's terrible death, his young widow (they had not been a year married) gave birth to a child—a girl. She did not survive the exhaustion of her confinement many days. The shock of her death snapped the feeble thread of the poor father's life. Both were borne to the grave on the same day. Before they died, both made the same prayer to their sole two mourners, the felon's sister, the old man's young bene-

factor. The prayer was this, that the new-born infant should be reared, however humbly, in ignorance of her birth, of a father's guilt and shame. She was not to pass a suppliant for charity to rich and high-born kinsfolk, who had vouchsafed no word even of pity to the felon's guiltless father and as guiltless wife. That promise has been kept till now. I am that daughter. The name I bear, and the name which I gave to my niece, are not ours, save as we may indirectly claim them through alliances centuries ago. I have never married. I was to have been a bride, bringing to the representative of no ignoble house what was to have been a princely dower; the wedding day was fixed, when the bolt fell. I have never again seen my betrothed. He went abroad and died there. I think he loved me, he knew I loved him. Who can blame him for deserting me? Who could marry the felon's sister? Who would marry the felon's child? Who, but one? The man who knows her secret, and will guard

it; the man who, caring little for other education, has helped to instil into her spotless childhood so steadfast a love of truth, so exquisite a pride of honour, that did she know such ignominy rested on her birth, she would pine herself away."

"Is there only one man on earth," cried Kenelm, suddenly, rearing his face,—till then concealed and downcast—and with a loftiness of pride on its aspect, new to its wonted mildness, "Is there only one man who would deem the virgin, at whose feet he desires to kneel and say, 'Deign to be the queen of my life,' not far too noble in herself to be debased by the sins of others before she was even born; is there only one man who does not think that the love of truth and the pride of honour are most royal attributes of woman or of man, no matter whether the fathers of the woman or the man were pirates as lawless as the fathers of Norman kings, or liars as unscrupulous, where their own interests were concerned, as have been the crowned representatives of lines

as deservedly famous as Cæsars and Bourbons, Tudors and Stuarts? Nobility, like genius, is inborn. One man alone guard *her* secret!—guard a secret that if made known could trouble a heart that recoils from shame! Ah, madam, we Chillinglys are a very obscure undistinguished race, but for more than a thousand years we have been English gentlemen. Guard her secret rather than risk the chance of discovery that could give her a pang? I would pass my whole life by her side in Kamtchatka, and even there I would not snatch a glimpse of the secret itself with mine own eyes, it should be so closely muffled and wrapped round by the folds of reverence and worship.”

This burst of passion seemed to Mrs Cameron the senseless declamation of an inexperienced, hot-headed young man, and putting it aside, much as a great lawyer dismisses as balderdash the florid rhetoric of some junior counsel, rhetoric in which the great lawyer had once indulged, or as a woman for whom romance is over dismisses

as idle verbiage some romantic sentiment that befools her young daughter, Mrs Cameron simply replied, "All this is hollow talk, Mr Chillingly; let us come to the point. After all I have said, do you mean to persist in your suit to my niece?"

"I persist."

"What!" she cried, this time indignantly, and with generous indignation; "what, even were it possible that you could win your parents' consent to marry the child of a man condemned to penal servitude, or, consistently with the duties a son owes to parents, conceal that fact from them, could you, born to a station on which every gossip will ask, 'Who and what is the name of the future Lady Chillingly?' believe that the who and the what will never be discovered! Have you, a mere stranger, unknown to us a few weeks ago, a right to say to Walter Melville, 'Resign to me that which is your sole reward for the sublime sacrifices, for the loyal devotion, for the watchful tenderness of patient years!'"

"Surely, madam," cried Kenelm, more startled, more shaken in soul by this appeal, than by the previous revelations; "surely, when we last parted, when I confided to you my love for your niece, when you consented to my proposal to return home, and obtain my father's approval of my suit; surely then was the time to say, 'No; a suitor with claims paramount and irresistible has come before you.'"

"I did not then know, Heaven is my witness, I did not then even suspect, that Walter Melville ever dreamed of seeking a wife in the child who had grown up under his eyes. You must own, indeed, how much I discouraged your suit; I could not discourage it more without revealing the secret of her birth, only to be revealed as an extreme necessity. But my persuasion was, that your father would not consent to your alliance with one so far beneath the expectations he was entitled to form, and the refusal of that consent would terminate all further acquaintance between you and

Lily, leaving her secret undisclosed. It was not till you had left, only indeed two days ago, that I received from Walter Melville a letter, which told me what I had never before conjectured. Here is the letter, read it, and then say if you have the heart to force yourself into rivalry, with— with—” She broke off, choked by her exertion, thrust the letter into his hands, and with keen, eager, hungry stare watched his countenance while he read.

“ ——— Street, Bloomsbury.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Joy and triumph! My picture is completed; the picture on which, for so many months, I have worked night and day in this den of a studio, without a glimpse of the green fields, concealing my address from every one, even from you, lest I might be tempted to suspend my labours. The picture is completed—it is sold; guess the price? Fifteen hundred guineas, and to a dealer—a dealer! Think of that! It is to be carried about the

country, exhibited by itself. You remember those three little landscapes of mine which two years ago I would gladly have sold for ten pounds, only neither Lily nor you would let me. My good friend and earliest patron, the German merchant at Luscombe, who called on me yesterday, offered to cover them with guineas thrice piled over the canvas. Imagine how happy I felt when I forced him to accept them as a present. What a leap in a man's life it is when he can afford to say 'I give!' Now then, at last, at last I am in a position which justifies the utterance of the hope which has for eighteen years been my solace, my support; been the sunbeam that ever shone through the gloom, when my fate was at the darkest; been the melody that buoyed me aloft as in the song of the skylark, when in the voices of men I heard but the laugh of scorn. Do you remember the night on which Lily's mother besought us to bring up her child in ignorance of her parentage, not even communicate to unkind and disdainful re-

latives that such a child was born? do you remember how plaintively, and yet how proudly, she so nobly born, so luxuriously nurtured, clasping my hand when I ventured to remonstrate and say that her own family could not condemn her child because of the father's guilt,—she, the proudest woman I ever knew, she whose smile I can at rare moments detect in Lily, raised her head from her pillow, and gasped forth—

“‘I am dying—the last words of the dying are commands. I command you to see that my child's lot is not that of a felon's daughter transported to the hearth of nobles. To be happy, her lot must be humble—no roof too humble to shelter, no husband too humble to wed, the felon's daughter.’

“From that hour I formed the resolve that I would keep hand and heart free, that when the grandchild of my princely benefactor grew up into womanhood I might say to her, ‘I am humbly born, but thy mother

would have given thee to me.' The newborn, consigned to our charge, has now ripened into woman, and I have now so assured my fortune that it is no longer poverty and struggle that I should ask her to share. I am conscious that, were her fate not so exceptional, this hope of mine would be a vain presumption—conscious that I am but the creature of her grandsire's bounty, and that from it springs all I ever can be—conscious of the disparity in years—conscious of many a past error and present fault. But, as fate so ordains, such considerations are trivial ; I am her rightful choice. What other choice, compatible with these necessities which weigh, dear and honoured friend, immeasurably more on your sense of honour than they do upon mine, and yet mine is not dull? Granting, then, that you, her nearest and most responsible relative, do not condemn me for presumption, all else seems to me clear. Lily's child-like affection for me is too deep and too fond not to warm into a wife's love. Happily, too, she has not

been reared in the stereotyped boarding-school shallownesses of knowledge and vulgarities of gentility; but educated, like myself, by the free influences of nature; longing for no halls and palaces save those that we build as we list, in fairyland; educated to comprehend and to share the fancies, which are more than book-lore to the worshipper of art and song. In a day or two, perhaps the day after you receive this, I shall be able to escape from London, and most likely shall come on foot as usual. How I long to see once more the woodbine on the hedgerows, the green blades of the corn-field, the sunny lapse of the river, and dearer still the tiny falls of our own little noisy rill! Meanwhile I entreat you, dearest, gentlest, most honoured of such few friends as my life has hitherto won to itself, to consider well the direct purport of this letter. If you, born in a grade so much higher than mine, feel that it is unwarrantable insolence in me to aspire to the hand of my patron's grandchild, say so plainly; and I remain not less grate-

ful for your friendship, than I was to your goodness when dining for the first time at your father's palace. Shy and sensitive and young, I felt that his grand guests wondered why I was invited to the same board as themselves. You, then courted, admired, you had sympathetic compassion on the raw, sullen boy; left those, who then seemed to me like the gods and goddesses of a heathen Pantheon, to come and sit beside your father's *protégé*, and cheeringly whisper to him such words as make a low-born, ambitious lad, go home light-hearted, saying to himself, 'Some day or other.' And what it is to an ambitious lad, fancying himself lifted by the gods and goddesses of a Pantheon, to go home light-hearted muttering to himself 'Some day or other,' I doubt if even you can divine.

"But should you be as kind to the presumptuous man as you were to the bashful boy, and say, 'Realized be the dream, fulfilled be the object of your life! take from me as her next of kin, the last descendant of your benefactor,' then I venture to address

to you this request. You are in the place of mother to your sister's child, act for her as a keeper now, to prepare her mind and heart for the coming change in the relations between her and me. When I last saw her, six months ago, she was still so playfully infantine that it half seems to me I should be sinning against the reverence due to a child, if I said too abruptly, 'You are woman, and I love you not as child but as woman.' And yet, time is not allowed to me for long, cautious, and gradual slide from the relationship of friend into that of lover. I now understand what the great master of my art once said to me, 'A career is a destiny.' By one of those merchant princes who now at Manchester, as they did once at Genoa or Venice, reign alike over those two civilizers of the world which to dull eyes seem antagonistic, Art and Commerce, an offer is made to me for a picture on a subject which strikes his fancy; an offer so magnificently liberal that his commerce must command my art; and the nature of the

subject compels me to seek the banks of the Rhine as soon as may be. I must have all the hues of the foliage in the meridian glories of summer. I can but stay at Grasmere a very few days ; but before I leave I must know this, am I going to work for Lily or am I not ? On the answer to that question depends all. If not to work for her, there would be no glory in the summer, no triumph in art to me : I refuse the offer. If she says ' Yes ; it is for me you work,' then she becomes my destiny. She assures my career. Here I speak as an artist : nobody who is not an artist can guess how sovereign over even his moral being, at a certain critical epoch in his career of artist or his life of man, is the success or the failure of a single work. But I go on to speak as man. My love for Lily is such for the last six months, that though if she rejected me I should still serve art, still yearn for fame, it would be as an old man might do either. The youth of my life would be gone. .

“As man I say, all my thoughts, all my dreams of happiness, distinct from Art and fame, are summed up in the one question—‘Is Lily to be my wife or not?’

“Yours affectionately,

“W. M.”

Kenelm returned the letter without a word.

Enraged by his silence, Mrs Cameron exclaimed: “Now, sir, what say you? You have scarcely known Lily five weeks. What is the feverish fancy of five weeks’ growth to the life-long devotion of a man like this! Do you now dare to say, ‘I persist’?”

Kenelm waved his hand very quietly, as if to dismiss all conception of taunt and insult, and said with his soft melancholy eyes fixed upon the working features of Lily’s aunt, “This man is more worthy of her than I. He prays you, in his letter, to prepare your niece for that change of relationship which he dreads too abruptly to break to her himself. Have you done so?”

“I have; the night I got the letter.”

“And—you hesitate; speak truthfully, I implore. And—she—”

“She,” answered Mrs Cameron, feeling herself involuntarily compelled to obey the voice of that prayer, “She seemed stunned at first, muttering, ‘This is a dream—it cannot be true—cannot! I Lion’s wife—I—I! I, his destiny! In me his happiness!’ And then she laughed her pretty child’s laugh, and put her arms round my neck, and said, ‘You are jesting, aunty. He could not write thus!’ So I put that part of his letter under her eyes; and when she had convinced herself, her face became very grave, more like a woman’s face than I ever saw it; and after a pause she cried out, passionately, ‘Can you think me—can I think myself—so bad, so ungrateful, as to doubt what I should answer, if Lion asked me whether I would willingly say or do anything that made him unhappy? If there be such a doubt in my heart, I would tear it out by the roots, heart and all!’ Oh! Mr Chillingly. There would be no happi-

ness for her with another, knowing that she had blighted the life of him to whom she owes so much, though she never will learn how much more she owes." Kenelm not replying to this remark, Mrs Cameron resumed. "I will be perfectly frank with you, Mr Chillingly. I was not quite satisfied with Lily's manner and looks the next morning, that is, yesterday. I did fear there might be some struggle in her mind in which there entered a thought of yourself. And when Walter, on his arrival here in the evening, spoke of you as one he had met before in his rural excursions, but whose name he only learned on parting at the bridge by Cromwell Lodge, I saw that Lily turned pale, and shortly afterwards went to her own room for the night. Fearing that any interview with you, though it would not alter her resolve, might lessen her happiness on the only choice she can and ought to adopt, I resolved to visit you this morning, and make that appeal to your reason and your heart which I have done now—not,

I am sure, in vain. Hush! I hear his voice!"

Melville entered the room, Lily leaning on his arm. The artist's comely face was radiant with an ineffable joyousness. Leaving Lily, he reached Kenelm's side as with a single bound, shook him heartily by the hand, and saying—"I find that you have already been a welcomed visitor in this house, Long may you be so, so say I, so (I answer for her) says my fair betrothed, to whom I need not present you."

Lily advanced, and held out her hand very timidly. Kenelm touched rather than clasped it. His own strong hand trembled like a leaf. He ventured but one glance at her face. All the bloom had died out of it, but the expression seemed to him wondrously, cruelly tranquil.

"Your betrothed—your future bride!" he said to the artist, with a mastery over his emotion rendered less difficult by the single glance at that tranquil face. "I wish you joy. All happiness to you,

Miss Mordaunt. You have made a noble choice."

He looked round for his hat ; it lay at his feet, but he did not see it ; his eyes wandering away with uncertain vision, like those of a sleep-walker.

Mrs Cameron picked up the hat and gave it to him.

"Thank you," he said meekly ; then with a smile half sweet, half bitter, "I have so much to thank you for, Mrs Cameron."

"But you are not going already—just as I enter too. Hold ! Mrs Cameron tells me you are lodging with my old friend Jones. Come and stop a couple of days with us, we can find you a room ; the room over your butterfly cage, eh Fairy ? "

"Thank you, too. Thank you all. No ; I must be in London by the first train."

Speaking thus, he had found his way to the door, bowed with the quiet grace that characterized all his movements, and was gone.

"Pardon his abruptness, Lily ; he too

loves; he too is impatient to find a betrothed," said the artist gaily: "but now he knows my dearest secret, I think I have a right to know his; and I will try."

He had scarcely uttered the words before he too had quitted the room and overtaken Kenelm just at the threshold.

"If you are going back to Cromwell Lodge—to pack up, I suppose—let me walk with you as far as the bridge."

Kenelm inclined his head assentingly and tacitly as they passed through the garden-gate, winding backward through the lane which skirted the garden-pales; when, at the very spot in which the day after their first and only quarrel Lily's face had been seen brightening through the evergreen, that day on which the old woman, quitting her, said, "God bless you!" and on which the vicar, walking with Kenelm, spoke of her fairy charms; well, just in that spot Lily's face appeared again, not this time *brightening* through the evergreens, unless the palest gleam of the palest moon can be said

to brighten. Kenelm saw, started, halted. His companion, then in the rush of a glad-some talk of which Kenelm had not heard a word, neither saw, nor halted; he walked on mechanically, gladsome and talking.

Lily stretched forth her hand through the evergreens. Kenelm took it reverentially. This time it was not his hand that trembled.

“Good-bye,” she said in a whisper, “good-bye for ever in this world. You understand—you do understand me. Say that you do.”

“I understand. Noble child — noble choice. God bless you. God comfort me!” murmured Kenelm. Their eyes met. Oh, the sadness; and, alas! oh the love in the eyes of both.

Kenelm passed on.

All said in an instant. How many Alls are said in an instant! Melville was in the midst of some glowing sentence, begun when Kenelm dropped from his side, and the end of the sentence was this:

“Words cannot say how fair seems life;

how easy seems conquest of fame, dating from this day—this day”— and in his turn he halted, looked round on the sunlit landscape and breathed deep, as if to drink into his soul all of the earth's joy and beauty which his gaze could compass, and the arch of the horizon bound.

“They who knew her even the best,” resumed the artist, striding on, “even her aunt never could guess how serious and earnest, under all her infantine prettiness of fancy, is that girl's real nature. We were walking along the brookside, when I began to tell how solitary the world would be to me if I could not win her to my side ; while I spoke she had turned aside from the path we had taken, and it was not till we were under the shadow of the church in which we shall be married that she uttered the words that gives to every cloud in my fate the silver lining ; implying thus how solemnly connected in her mind was the thought of love with the sanctity of religion.”

Kenelm shuddered — the church — the

burial-ground—the old gothic tomb—the flowers round the infant's grave!

“But I am talking a great deal too much about myself,” resumed the artist. “Lovers are the most consummate of all egotists, and the most garrulous of all gossips. You have wished me joy on my destined nuptials, when shall I wish you joy on yours? Since we have begun to confide in each other, you are in my debt as to a confidence.”

They had now gained the bridge. Kenelm turned round abruptly, “Good day; let us part here. I have nothing to confide to you that might not seem to your ears a mockery when I wish you joy.” So saying, so obeying in spite of himself the anguish of his heart, Kenelm wrung his companion's hand with the force of an uncontrollable agony, and speeded over the bridge before Melville recovered his surprise.

The artist would have small claim to the essential attribute of genius, viz., the intuitive sympathy of passion with passion, if that secret of Kenelm's which he had so

lightly said, "he had acquired the right to learn," was not revealed to him as by an electric flash. "Poor fellow!" he said to himself, pityingly; "how natural that he should fall in love with Fairy! but happily he is so young, and such a philosopher, that it is but one of those trials through which, at least ten times a year, I have gone with wounds that leave not a scar."

Thus soliloquising, the warm-blooded worshipper of Nature returned homeward, too blest in the triumph of his own love to feel more than a kindly compassion for the wounded heart, consigned with no doubt of the healing result to the fickleness of youth and the consolations of philosophy. Not for a moment did the happier rival suspect that Kenelm's love was returned; that an atom in the heart of the girl who had promised to be his bride, could take its light or shadow from any love but his own. Yet, more from delicacy of respect to the rival so suddenly self-betrayed, than from any more prudential motive, he did not speak

even to Mrs Cameron of Kenelm's secret and sorrow; and certainly neither she nor Lily was disposed to ask any question that concerned the departed visitor.

In fact the name of Kenelm Chillingly was scarcely, if at all, mentioned in that household during the few days which elapsed before Walter Melville quitted Grasmere for the banks of the Rhine, not to return till the autumn, when his marriage with Lily was to take place. During those days Lily was calm and seemingly cheerful—her manner towards her betrothed, if more subdued, not less affectionate than of old. Mrs Cameron congratulated herself on having so successfully got rid of Kenelm Chillingly.

CHAPTER VIII.

So, then, but for that officious warning, uttered under the balcony at Luscombe, Kenelm Chillingly might never have had a rival in Walter Melville. But ill would any reader construe the character of Kenelm, did he think that such a thought increased the bitterness of his sorrow. No sorrow in the thought that a noble nature had been saved from the temptation to a great sin.

The good man does good merely by living. And the good he does may often mar the plans he formed for his own happiness. But he cannot regret that Heaven has permitted him to do good.

What Kenelm did feel is perhaps best explained in the letter to Sir Peter, which is here subjoined.

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—Never till my dying day shall I forget that tender desire for my happiness with which, overcoming all worldly considerations, no matter at what disappointment to your own cherished plans or ambition for the heir to your name and race, you sent me away from your roof, these words ringing in my ear like the sound of joy-bells, ‘Choose as you will, with my blessing on your choice. I open my heart to admit another child—your wife shall be my daughter.’ It is such an unspeakable comfort to me to recall those words now. Of all human affections gratitude is surely the holiest; and it blends itself with the sweetness of religion when it is gratitude to a father. And, therefore, do not grieve too much for me, when I tell you that the hopes which enchanted me when we parted are not to be fulfilled. Her hand is pledged to another—another with claims upon her preference to which mine cannot be compared; and he is himself, putting aside the accidents of birth and fortune, immeasurably my supe-

rior. In that thought—I mean the thought that the man she selects deserves her more than I do, and that in his happiness she will blend her own—I shall find comfort, so soon as I can fairly reason down the first all-engrossing selfishness that follows the sense of unexpected and irremediable loss. Meanwhile you will think it not unnatural that I resort to such aids for change of heart as are afforded by change of scene. I start for the Continent to-night, and shall not rest till I reach Venice, which I have not yet seen. I feel irresistibly attracted towards still canals and gliding gondolas. I will write to you and to my dear mother the day I arrive. And I trust to write cheerfully, with full accounts of all I see and encounter. Do not, dearest father, in your letters to me revert or allude to that grief, which even the tenderest word from your own tender self might but chafe into pain more sensitive. After all, a disappointed love is a very common lot. And we meet every day men—ay, and women too—who have known it, and are thoroughly cured.

“The manliest of our modern lyrical poets
has said very nobly and, no doubt, very
justly,

‘To bear is to conquer our fate.’

“Ever your loving son,
“K. C.”

CHAPTER IX.

NEARLY a year and a half has elapsed since the date of my last chapter. Two Englishmen were—the one seated, the other reclined at length—on one of the mounds that furrow the ascent of Posilippo. Before them spread the noiseless sea, basking in the sunshine, without visible ripple; to the left there was a distant glimpse through gaps of brushwood of the public gardens and white water of the Chiaja. They were friends who had chanced to meet abroad — unexpectedly — joined company, and travelled together for many months, chiefly in the East. They had been but a few days in Naples. The elder of the two had important affairs in England which ought to have summoned him back long since. But he did not let his friend know

this ; his affairs seemed to him less important than the duties he owed to one for whom he 'entertained that deep and noble love which is something stronger than brotherly, for with brotherly affection it combines gratitude and reverence. He knew, too, that his friend was oppressed by a haunting sorrow, of which the cause was divined by one, not revealed by the other.

To leave him, so beloved, alone with that sorrow in strange lands, was a thought not to be cherished by a friend so tender ; for in the friendship of this man there was that sort of tenderness which completes a nature, thoroughly manlike, by giving it a touch of the woman's.

It was a day which in our northern climates is that of winter ; in the southern clime of Naples it was mild as an English summer day, lingering on the brink of autumn. The sun sloping towards the west, and already gathering around it roseate and purple fleeces. Elsewhere, the deep-blue sky was without a cloudlet.

Both had been for some minutes silent; at length the man reclined on the grass—it was the younger man—said suddenly, and with no previous hint of the subject introduced, “Lay your hand on your heart, Tom, and answer me truly. Are your thoughts as clear from regrets as the heavens above us are from a cloud? Man takes regret from tears that have ceased to flow, as the heaven takes cloud from the rains that have ceased to fall.”

“Regrets? Ah, I understand, for the loss of the girl I once loved to distraction! No; surely I made that clear to you many, many, many months ago, when I was your guest at Moleswick.”

“Ay, but I have never, since then, spoken to you on that subject. I did not dare. It seems to me so natural that a man, in the earlier struggle between love and reason, should say, ‘reason shall conquer, and has conquered;’ and yet—and yet—as time glides on, feel that the conquerors who cannot put down rebellion have a very uneasy

reign. Answer me not as at Moleswick, during the first struggle, but now, in the after-day, when reaction from struggle comes."

"Upon my honour," answered the friend, "I have had no reaction at all. I was cured entirely, when I had once seen Jessie again, another man's wife, mother to his child, happy in her marriage; and, whether she was changed or not—very different from the sort of wife I should like to marry, now that I am no longer a village farrier."

"And, I remember, you spoke of some other girl whom it would suit you to marry. You have been long abroad from her. Do you ever think of her—think of her still as your future wife? Can you love her? Can you, who have once loved so faithfully, love again?"

"I am sure of that. I love Emily better than I did when I left England. We correspond. She writes such nice letters." Tom hesitated, blushed, and continued timidly, "I should like to show you one of her letters."

“Do.”

Tom drew forth the last of such letters from his breast pocket.

Kenelm raised himself from the grass, took the letter, and read slowly, carefully, while Tom watched in vain for some approving smile to brighten up the dark beauty of that melancholy face.

Certainly it was the letter a man in love might show with pride to a friend; the letter of a lady, well educated, well brought up, evincing affection modestly, intelligence modestly too; the sort of letter in which a mother who loved her daughter, and approved the daughter's choice, could not have suggested a correction.

As Kenelm gave back the letter, his eyes met his friend's. Those were eager eyes—eyes hungering for praise. Kenelm's heart smote him for that worst of sins in friendship—want of sympathy; and that uneasy heart forced to his lips congratulations, not perhaps quite sincere, but which amply satisfied the lover. In uttering

them, Kenelm rose to his feet, threw his arm round his friend's shoulder, and said, "Are you not tired of this place, Tom? I am. Let us go back to England to-morrow." Tom's honest face brightened vividly. "How selfish and egotistical I have been!" continued Kenelm; "I ought to have thought more of you, your career, your marriage—pardon me——"

"Pardon you—pardon! Don't I owe to you all—owe to you Emily herself? If you had never come to Graveleigh, never said, 'Be my friend,' what should I have been now? what—what?"

The next day the two friends quitted Naples, *en route* for England, not exchanging many words by the way. The old loquacious crotchety humour of Kenelm had deserted him. A duller companion than he was you could not have conceived. He might have been the hero of a young lady's novel.

It was only when they parted in London that Kenelm evinced more secret purpose,

more external emotion than one of his heraldic Daces shifting from the bed to the surface of a waveless pond.

“If I have rightly understood you, Tom, all this change in you, all this cure of torturing regret, was wrought — wrought lastingly — wrought so as to leave you heart-free for the world’s actions and a home’s peace, on that eve when you saw her whose face till then had haunted you, another man’s happy wife, and in so seeing her, either her face was changed, or your heart became so.”

“Quite true. I might express it otherwise, but the fact remains the same.”

“God bless you, Tom ; bless you in your career without, in your home within,” said Kenelm, wringing his friend’s hand at the door of the carriage that was to whirl to love, and wealth, and station, the whilom bully of a village, along the iron groove of that contrivance, which, though now the tritest of prosaic realities, seemed once too poetical for a poet’s wildest visions.

CHAPTER X.

A WINTER'S evening at Moleswick. Very different from a winter sunset at Naples. It is intensely cold. There has been a slight fall of snow, accompanied with severe, bright, clear frost, a thin sprinkling of white on the pavements. Kenelm Chillingly entered the town on foot, no longer a knapsack on his back. Passing through the main street, he paused a moment at the door of Will Somers. The shop was closed. No, he would not stay there to ask in a roundabout way for news. He would go in straightforwardly and manfully to Grasmere. He would take the inmates there by surprise. The sooner he could bring

Tom's experience home to himself, the better. He had schooled his heart to rely on that experience, and it brought him back the old elasticity of his stride. In his lofty carriage and buoyant face were again visible the old haughtiness of the indifferentism that keeps itself aloof from the turbulent emotions and conventional frivolities of those whom its philosophy pities and scorns.

"Ha! ha!" laughed he who like Swift never laughed aloud, and often laughed inaudibly. "Ha! ha! I shall exorcise the ghost of my grief. I shall never be haunted again. If that stormy creature whom love might have maddened into crime, if *he* were cured of love at once by a single visit to the home of her whose face was changed to him—for the smiles and the tears of it had become the property of another man—how much more should I be left without a scar! I, the heir of the Chillinglys! I, the kinsman of a Mivers! I, the pupil of a Welby! I—I, Kenelm Chillingly, to be thus—thus—"

Here, in the midst of his boastful soliloquy, the well-remembered brook rushed suddenly upon eye and ear, gleaming and moaning under the wintry moon. Kenelm Chillingly stopped, covered his face with his hands, and burst into a passion of tears.

Recovering himself slowly, he went on along the path, every step of which was haunted by the form of Lily.

He reached the garden gate of Grasmere, lifted the latch, and entered. As he did so, a man, touching his hat, rushed beside, and advanced before him—the village postman. Kenelm drew back, allowing the man to pass to the door, and as he thus drew back, he caught a side view of lighted windows looking on the lawn—the windows of the pleasant drawing-room in which he had first heard Lily speak of her guardian.

The postman left his letters, and regained the garden gate, while Kenelm still stood wistfully gazing on those lighted windows. He had, meanwhile, advanced along the whitened sward to the light, saying to him-

self, "Let me just see her and her happiness, and then I will knock boldly at the door, and say, 'Good evening, Mrs Melville.'"

So Kenelm stole across the lawn, and stationing himself at the angle of the wall, looked into the window.

Melville, in dressing-robe and slippers, was seated alone by the fireside. His dog was lazily stretched on the hearth-rug. One by one the features of the room, as the scene of his vanished happiness, grew out from its stillness; the delicately-tinted walls; the dwarf bookcase, with its feminine ornaments on the upper shelf; the piano standing in the same place. Lily's own small low chair; *that* was not in its old place, but thrust into a remote angle as if it had passed into disuse. Melville was reading a letter, no doubt one of those which the postman had left. Surely the contents were pleasant, for his fair face, always frankly expressive of emotion, brightened wonderfully as he read on. Then he rose with a quick, brisk movement, and pulled the bell hastily.

A neat maid-servant entered—a strange face to Kenelm. Melville gave her some brief message. “He has had joyous news,” thought Kenelm. “He has sent for his wife, that she may share his joy.” Presently the door opened, and entered, not Lily, but Mrs Cameron.

She looked changed. Her natural quietude of mien and movement the same, indeed, but with more languor in it. Her hair had become grey. Melville was standing by the table as she approached him. He put the letter into her hands with a gay, proud smile, and looked over her shoulder while she read it, pointing with his finger as to some lines that should more emphatically claim her attention.

When she had finished, her face reflected his smile. They exchanged a hearty shake of the hand, as if in congratulation. “Ah,” thought Kenelm, “the letter is from Lily. She is abroad. Perhaps the birth of a first-born.”

Just then Blanche, who had not been

visible before, emerged from under the table, and as Melville re-seated himself by the fire-side, sprang into his lap, rubbing herself against his breast. The expression of his face changed ; he uttered some low exclamation. Mrs Cameron took the creature from his lap, stroking it quietly, carried it across the room, and put it outside the door. Then she seated herself beside the artist, placing her hand in his, and they conversed in low tones, till Melville's face again grew bright, and again he took up the letter.

A few minutes later the maid-servant entered with the tea things, and after arranging them on the table approached the window. Kenelm retreated into the shade, the servant closed the shutters and drew the curtains—that scene of quiet home comfort vanished from the eyes of the looker on.

Kenelm felt strangely perplexed. What had become of Lily ? was she indeed absent from her home ? Had he conjectured rightly, that the letter which had evidently so gladdened Melville was from her, or was it

possible—here a thought of joy seized his heart and held him breathless—was it possible that, after all, she had not married her guardian ; had found a home elsewhere—was free ? He moved on farther down the lawn, towards the water, that he might better bring before his sight that part of the irregular building in which Lily formerly had her sleeping-chamber, and her “own—own room.” All was dark there ; the shutters inexorably closed. The place with which the childlike girl had associated her most childlike fancies, taming and tending the honey drinkers destined to pass into fairies, that fragile tenement was not closed against the winds and snows ; its doors were drearily open ; gaps in the delicate wire-work ; of its dainty draperies a few tattered shreds hanging here and there ; and on the depopulated floor the moonbeams resting cold and ghostly. No spray from the tiny fountain ; its basin chipped and mouldering ; the scanty waters therein frozen. Of all the pretty wild ones that Lily fancied she could tame, not one.

Ah! yes, there was one, probably not of the old familiar number; a stranger that might have crept in for shelter from the first blasts of winter, and now clung to an angle in the farther wall, its wings folded—asleep, not dead. But Kenelm saw it not; he noticed only the general desolation of the spot.

“Natural enough,” thought he. “She has outgrown all such pretty silliness. A wife cannot remain a child. Still, if she had belonged to me. . . .” The thought choked even his inward, unspoken utterance. He turned away, paused a moment under the leafless boughs of the great willow still dipping into the brook, and then with impatient steps strode back towards the garden gate.

“No—no—no. I cannot now enter that house and ask for Mrs Melville. Trial enough for one night to stand on the old ground. I will return to the town. I will call at Jessie’s, and there I can learn if she indeed be happy.”

So he went on by the path along the brookside, the night momentarily colder and

colder, and momentarily clearer and clearer, while the moon noiselessly glided into loftier heights. Wrapt in his abstracted thoughts, when he came to the spot in which the path split in twain he did not take that which led more directly to the town. His steps, naturally enough following the train of his thoughts, led him along the path with which the object of his thoughts was associated. He found himself on the burial ground, and in front of the old ruined tomb with the effaced inscription.

“Ah! child—child!” he murmured almost audibly, “what depths of woman tenderness lay concealed in thee! In what loving sympathy with the past—sympathy only vouchsafed to the tenderest women and the highest poets—didst thou lay thy flowers on the tomb, to which thou didst give a poet’s history interpreted by a woman’s heart, little dreaming that beneath the stone slept a hero of thine own fallen race.”

He passed beneath the shadow of the yews, whose leaves no winter wind can strew, and

paused at the ruined tomb—no flower now on its stone, only a sprinkling of snow at the foot of it—sprinklings of snow at the foot of each humbler grave mound. Motionless in the frosty air rested the pointed church spire, and through the frosty air, higher and higher up the arch of heaven, soared the unpausing moon. Around, and below, and above her, the stars which no science can number; yet not less difficult to number are the thoughts, desires, aspirations, which, in a space of time briefer than a winter's night, can pass through the infinite deeps of a human soul.

From his stand by the Gothic tomb, Kenelm looked along the churchyard for the infant's grave, which Lily's pious care had bordered with votive flowers. Yes, in that direction there was still a gleam of colour; could it be of flowers in that biting winter time—the moon is so deceptive, it silvers into the hue of the jessamines the green of the everlastings.

He passed towards the white grave mound. His sight had duped him; no pale flower, no green "everlasting" on its neglected border—

only brown mould, withered stalks, streaks of snow.

“And yet,” he said sadly, “she told me she had never broken a promise; and she had given a promise to the dying child. Ah! she is too happy now to think of the dead.”

So murmuring, he was about to turn towards the town, when close by that child's grave he saw another. Round that other there were pale “everlastings,” dwarfed blossoms of the laurestinus; at the four angles the drooping bud of a Christmas rose; at the head of the grave was a white stone, its sharp edges cutting into the star-lit air; and on the head, in fresh letters were inscribed these words:

To the Memory of

L. M.

Aged 17,

Died October 29, A.D. 18—.

This stone, above the grave to which her mortal remains are consigned, beside that of an infant not more sinless, is consecrated by those who most mourn and miss her.

ISABEL CAMERON,

WALTER MELVILLE.

“Suffer the little children to come unto me.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning Mr. Emlyn, passing from his garden to the town of Moleswick, descried a human form stretched on the burial ground, stirring restlessly but very slightly, as if with an involuntary shiver, and uttering broken sounds, very faintly heard, like the moans that a man in pain strives to suppress and cannot.

The rector hastened to the spot. The man was lying, his face downward, on a grave-mound, not dead, not asleep.

“Poor fellow! overtaken by drink, I fear,” thought the gentle pastor; and as it was the habit of his mind to compassionate error even more than grief, he accosted the supposed sinner in very soothing tones—trying

to raise him from the ground—and with very kindly words.

Then the man lifted his face from its pillow on the grave-mound, looked round him dreamily into the grey, blank air of the cheerless morn, and rose to his feet quietly and slowly.

The vicar was startled; he recognised the face of him he had last seen in the magnificent affluence of health and strength. But the character of the face was changed—so changed! its old serenity of expression, at once grave and sweet, succeeded by a wild trouble in the heavy eyelids and trembling lips.

“Mr Chillingly—you! Is it possible?”

“Varus, Varus,” exclaimed Kenelm passionately, “what hast thou done with my legions?”

At that quotation of the well-known greeting of Augustus to his unfortunate general, the scholar recoiled. Had his young friend’s mind deserted him—dazed, perhaps, by over-study?

He was soon reassured ; Kenelm's face settled back into calm, though a dreary calm, like that of the wintry day.

"I beg pardon, Mr Emlyn ; I had not quite shaken off the hold of a strange dream. I dreamed that I was worse off than Augustus ; he did not lose the world when the legions he had trusted to another vanished into a grave."

Here Kenelm linked his arm in that of the rector—on which he leaned rather heavily—and drew him on from the burial ground into the open space where the two paths met.

"But how long have you returned to Moleswick ?" asked Emlyn ; "and how come you to choose so damp a bed for your morning slumbers ?"

"The wintry cold crept into my veins when I stood in the burial ground, and I was very weary ; I had no sleep at night. Do not let me take you out of your way ; I am going on to Grasmere. So I see, by the record on a gravestone, that it is more

than a year ago since Mr Melville lost his wife."

"Wife? He never married."

"What!" cried Kenelm. "Whose, then, is that gravestone—'L. M.'?"

"Alas! it is our poor Lily's."

"And she died unmarried?"

As Kenelm said this he looked up, and the sun broke out from the gloomy haze of the morning. "I may claim thee, then," he thought within himself—"claim thee as mine when we meet again."

"Unmarried—yes," resumed the vicar. "She was indeed betrothed to her guardian; they were to have been married in the autumn, on his return from the Rhine. He went there to paint on the spot itself his great picture, which is now so famous—'Roland, the Hermit Knight, looking towards the convent lattice for a sight of the Holy Nun.' Melville had scarcely gone before the symptoms of the disease which proved fatal to poor Lily betrayed themselves; they baffled all medical skill—rapid decline. She

was always very delicate, but no one detected in her the seeds of consumption. Melville only returned a day or two before her death. Dear childlike Lily! how we all mourned for her!—not least the poor, who believed in her fairy charms.”

“And least of all, it appears, the man she was to have married.”

“He?—Melville? How can you wrong him so? His grief was intense—overpowering—for the time.”

“For the time! what time?” muttered Kenelm in tones too low for the pastor’s ear.

They moved on silently. Mr Emlyn resumed:

“You noticed the text on Lily’s gravestone—‘Suffer the little children to come unto me’? She dictated it herself the day before she died. I was with her then, so I was at the last.”

“Were you—were you—at the last—the last? Good day, Mr Emlyn; we are just in sight of the garden gate. And—excuse me—I wish to see Mr Melville alone.”

“Well, then, good day; but if you are making any stay in the neighbourhood, will you not be our guest? We have a room at your service.”

“I thank you gratefully; but I return to London in an hour or so. Hold, a moment. You were with her at the last? She was resigned to die?”

“Resigned! that is scarcely the word. The smile left upon her lips was not that of human resignation; it was the smile of a divine joy.”

CHAPTER XII.

"Yes, sir, Mr Melville is at home, in his studio."

Kenelm followed the maid across the hall into a room not built at the date of Kenelm's former visits to the house: the artist, making Grasmere his chief residence after Lily's death, had added it at the back of the neglected place wherein Lily had encaged "the souls of infants unbaptized."

A lofty room, with a casement partially darkened, to the bleak north; various sketches on the walls; gaunt specimens of antique furniture, and of gorgeous Italian silks, scattered about in confused disorder; one large picture on its easel curtained; another as large, and half finished, before which stood the painter. He turned quickly as Kenelm

entered the room unannounced, let fall brush and palette, came up to him eagerly, grasped his hand, drooped his head on Kenelm's shoulder, and said, in a voice struggling with evident and strong emotion :

“ Since we parted, such grief ! such a loss ! ”

“ I know it ; I have seen her grave. Let us not speak of it. Why so needlessly revive your sorrow ? So—so—your sanguine hopes are fulfilled—the world at last has done you justice ? Emlyn tells me that you have painted a very famous picture.”

Kenelm had seated himself as he thus spoke. The painter still stood with dejected attitude on the middle of the floor, and brushed his hand over his moistened eyes once or twice before he answered, “ Yes, wait a moment, don't talk of fame yet. Bear with me, the sudden sight of you unnerved me.”

The artist here seated himself also on an old worm-eaten gothic chest, rumpling and chafing the golden or tinselled threads of

the embroidered silk, so rare and so time-worn, flung over the gothic chest, so rare also, and so worm-eaten.

Kenelm looked through half-closed lids at the artist, and his lips, before slightly curved with a secret scorn, became gravely compressed. In Melville's struggle to conceal emotion the strong man recognised a strong man—recognised, and yet only wondered; wondered how such a man, to whom Lily had pledged her hand, could so soon after the loss of Lily go on painting pictures, and care for any praise bestowed on a yard of canvas.

In a very few minutes Melville recommenced conversation—no more reference to Lily than if she had never existed. "Yes, my last picture has been indeed a success, a reward complete, if tardy, for all the bitterness of former struggles made in vain, for the galling sense of injustice, the anguish of which only an artist knows, when unworthy rivals are ranked before him.

'Foes quick to blame, and friends afraid to praise.'

True, that I have still much to encounter, the cliques still seek to disparage me, but between me and the cliques there stands at last the giant form of the public, and at last critics of graver weight than the cliques have deigned to accord to me a higher rank than even the public yet acknowledge. Ah! Mr Chillingly, you do not profess to be a judge of paintings, but, excuse me, just look at this letter. I received it only last night from the greatest connoisseur of my art, certainly in England, perhaps in Europe." Here Melville drew, from the side pocket of his picturesque *moyen âge* surtout, a letter signed by a name authoritative to all who—being painters themselves—acknowledge authority in one who could no more paint a picture himself than Addison, the ablest critic of the greatest poem modern Europe has produced, could have written ten lines of the *Paradise Lost*—and thrust the letter into Kenelm's hand. Kenelm read it listlessly, with an increased contempt for an artist who could so find in gratified vanity

consolation for the life gone from earth. But, listlessly as he read the letter, the sincere and fervent enthusiasm of the laudatory contents impressed him, and the pre-eminent authority of the signature could not be denied.

The letter was written on the occasion of Melville's recent election to the dignity of R.A., successor to a very great artist whose death had created a vacancy in the Academy. He returned the letter to Melville, saying, "This is the letter I saw you reading last night as I looked in at your window. Indeed, for a man who cares for the opinion of other men, this letter is very flattering; and for the painter who cares for money, it must be very pleasant to know by how many guineas every inch of his canvas may be covered." Unable longer to control his passions of rage, of scorn, of agonizing grief, Kenelm then burst forth, "Man, Man, whom I once accepted as a teacher on human life, a teacher to warm, to brighten, to exalt mine own indifferent, dreamy, slow-pulsed self!

has not the one woman whom thou didst select out of this over-crowded world to be bone of thy bone, flesh of thy flesh, vanished evermore from the earth—little more than a year since her voice was silenced, her heart ceased to beat? But how slight is such loss to thy life, compared to the worth of a compliment that flatters thy vanity!"

The artist rose to his feet with an indignant impulse. But the angry flush faded from his cheek as he looked on the countenance of his rebuker. He walked up to him, and attempted to take his hand, but Kenelm snatched it scornfully from his grasp.

"Poor friend," said Melville, sadly and soothingly, "I did not think you loved her thus deeply. Pardon me." He drew a chair close to Kenelm's, and after a brief pause went on thus, in very earnest tones, "I am not so heartless, not so forgetful of my loss as you suppose. But reflect, you have but just learned of her death, you are under the first shock of grief. More than a year

has been given to me for gradual submission to the decree of Heaven. Now listen to me, and try to listen calmly. I am many years older than you, I ought to know better the conditions on which man holds the tenure of life. Life is composite, many-sided, nature does not permit it to be lastingly monopolized by a single passion, or, while yet in the prime of its strength, to be lastingly blighted by a single sorrow. Survey the great mass of our common race, engaged in the various callings, some the humblest, some the loftiest, by which the business of the world is carried on,—can you justly despise as heartless the poor trader, or the great statesman, when, it may be but a few days after the loss of some one nearest and dearest to his heart, the trader reopens his shop, the statesman reappears in his office? But in me, the votary of art, in me you behold but the weakness of gratified vanity—if I feel joy in the hope that my art may triumph, and my country may add my name to the list of those who con-

tribute to her renown—where and whenever lived an artist not sustained by that hope, in privation, in sickness, in the sorrows he must share with his kind? Nor is this hope that of a feminine vanity, a sicklier craving for applause, it identifies itself with glorious services to our land, to our race, to the children of all after time. Our art cannot triumph, our name cannot live, unless we achieve a something that tends to beautify or ennoble the world in which we accept the common heritage of toil and of sorrow, in order, therefrom, to work out for successive multitudes a recreation and a joy.”

While the artist thus spoke, Kenelm lifted towards his face eyes charged with suppressed tears. And the face, kindling as the artist vindicated himself from the young man's bitter charge, became touchingly sweet in its grave expression at the close of the not ignoble defence.

“Enough,” said Kenelm rising. “There is a ring of truth in what you say. I can

conceive the artist's, the poet's, escape from this world when all therein is death and winter, into the world he creates and colours at his will with the hues of summer. So, too, I can conceive how the man whose life is sternly fitted into the grooves of a trader's calling, or a statesman's duties, is borne on by the force of custom, afar from such brief halting spot as a grave. But I am no poet, no artist, no trader, no statesman; I have no calling, my life is fixed into no grooves. Adieu."

"Hold a moment. Not now, but somewhat later, ask yourself whether any life can be permitted to wander in space, a monad detached from the lives of others. Into some groove or other, sooner or later, it must settle, and be borne on obedient to the laws of nature and the responsibility to God."

CHAPTER XIII.

KENELM went back alone, and with down-cast looks, through the desolate flowerless garden, when at the other side of the gate a light touch was laid on his arm. He looked up, and recognised Mrs Cameron.

"I saw you," she said, "from my window coming to the house, and I have been waiting for you here. I wished to speak to you alone. Allow me to walk beside you."

Kenelm inclined his head assentingly, but made no answer.

They were nearly midway between the cottage and the burial-ground when Mrs Cameron resumed, her tones quick and agitated contrasting her habitual languid quietude—

"I have a great weight on my mind; it

ought not to be remorse. I acted as I thought in my conscience for the best. But oh, Mr Chillingly, if I erred—if I judged wrongly, do say you at least forgive me.” She seized his hand, pressing it convulsively. Kenelm muttered inaudibly—a sort of dreary stupor had succeeded to the intense excitement of grief. Mrs Cameron went on—

“You could not have married Lily—you know you could not. The secret of her birth could not, in honour, have been concealed from your parents. They could not have consented to your marriage; and even if you had persisted, without that consent and in spite of that secret, to press for it—even had she been yours ——”

“Might she not be living now?” cried Kenelm fiercely.

“No—no; the secret must have come out. The cruel world would have discovered it; it would have reached her ears. The shame of it would have killed her. How bitter then would have been her short interval of life! As it is, she passed away—resigned

and happy. But I own that I did not, could not, understand her, could not believe her feeling for you to be so deep. I did think, that, when she knew her own heart, she would find that love for her guardian was its strongest affection. She assented, apparently without a pang, to become his wife ; and she seemed always so fond of him, and what girl would not be ? But I was mistaken—deceived. From the day you saw her last, she began to fade away ; but then Walter left a few days after, and I thought that it was his absence she mourned. She never owned to me that it was yours—never till too late—too late—just when my sad letter had summoned him back only three days before she died. Had I known earlier while yet there was hope of recovery, I must have written to you, even though the obstacles to your union with her remained the same. Oh, again I implore you, say that if I erred you forgive me. She did, kissing me so tenderly. She did forgive me. Will not you ? It would have been her wish.”

“Her wish? Do you think I could disobey it? I know not if I have anything to forgive. If I have, how could I not forgive one who loved her? God comfort us both.”

He bent down and kissed Mrs Cameron’s forehead. The poor woman threw her arm gratefully, lovingly round him, and burst into tears.

When she had recovered her emotion she said—

“And now, it is with so much lighter a heart that I can fulfil her commission to you. But, before I place this in your hands, can you make me one promise? Never tell Melville how she loved you. She was so careful he should never guess that. And if he knew it was the thought of union with him which had killed her, he would never smile again.”

“You would not ask such a promise if you could guess how sacred from all the world I hold the secret that you confide to me. By that secret the grave is changed into an altar. Our bridals now are only awhile deferred.”

Mrs Cameron placed a letter in Kenelm's hand, and murmuring in accents broken by a sob, "She gave it to me the day before her last," left him, and with quick vacillating steps hurried back towards the cottage. She now understood *him*, at last, too well not to feel that on opening that letter he must be alone with the dead.

It is strange that we need have so little practical household knowledge of each other to be in love. Never till then had Kenelm's eyes rested upon Lily's handwriting. And he now gazed at the formal address on the envelope with a sort of awe. Unknown handwriting coming to him from an unknown world—delicate, tremulous handwriting—handwriting not of one grown up, yet not of a child who had long to live.

He turned the envelope over and over—not impatiently as does the lover whose heart beats at the sound of the approaching footstep, but lingeringly, timidly. He would not break the seal.

He was now so near the burial-ground.

Where should the first letter ever received from her—the sole letter he ever could receive—be so reverentially, lovingly read, as at her grave?

He walked on to the burial-ground, sat down by the grave, broke the envelope; a poor little ring, with a poor little single turquoise, rolled out and rested at his feet. The letter contained only these words:

“The ring comes back to you. I could not live to marry another. I never knew how I loved you—till, till I began to pray that you might not love me too much. Darling! darling! good-bye, darling!

“LILY.

“Don’t let Lion ever see this, or ever know what it says to you. He is so good, and deserves to be so happy. Do you remember the day of the ring? Darling! darling!”

CHAPTER XIV.

SOMEWHAT more than another year has rolled away. It is early spring in London. The trees in the parks and squares are budding into leaf and blossom. Leopold Travers has had a brief but serious conversation with his daughter, and is now gone forth on horseback. Handsome and graceful still, Leopold Travers when in London is pleased to find himself scarcely less the fashion with the young than he was when himself in youth. He is now riding along the banks of the Serpentine, no one better mounted, better dressed, better looking, or talking with greater fluency on the topics which interest his companions.

Cecilia is in the smaller drawing-room,

which is exclusively appropriated to her use—alone with Lady Glenalvon.

LADY GLENALVON: I own, my dear, dear Cecilia, that I range myself at last on the side of your father. How earnestly at one time I had hoped that Kenelm Chillingly might woo and win the bride that seemed to me most fitted to adorn and to cheer his life, I need not say. But when at Exmundham he asked me to befriend his choice of another, to reconcile his mother to that choice—evidently not a suitable one—I gave him up. And though that affair is at an end, he seems little likely ever to settle down to practical duties and domestic habits, an idle wanderer over the face of the earth, only heard of in remote places and with strange companions. Perhaps he may never return to England.

CECILIA: He is in England now, and in London.

LADY GLENALVON: You amaze me! Who told you so?

CECILIA: His father, who is with him.

Sir Peter called yesterday, and spoke to me so kindly. Cecilia here turned aside her face to conceal the tears that had started to her eyes.

LADY GLENALVON : Did Mr Travers see Sir Peter ?

CECILIA : Yes ; and I think it was something that passed between them which made my father speak to me—for the first time—almost sternly.

LADY GLENALVON : In urging Gordon Chillingly's suit.

CECILIA : Commanding me to reconsider my rejection of it. He has contrived to fascinate my father.

LADY GLENALVON : So he has me. Of course you might choose among other candidates for your hand one of much higher worldly rank, of much larger fortune, yet, as you have already rejected them, Gordon's merits became still more entitled to a fair hearing. He has already leapt into a position that mere rank and mere wealth cannot attain. Men of all parties speak highly of

his parliamentary abilities. He is already marked in public opinion as a coming man—a future minister of the highest grade. He has youth and good looks, his moral character is without a blemish, yet his manners are so free from affected austerity, so frank, so genial. Any woman might be pleased with his companionship; and you with your intellect, your culture; you so born for high station; you of all women might be proud to partake the anxieties of his career, and the rewards of his ambition.

CECILIA (clasping her hands tightly together): I cannot, I cannot. He may be all you say—I know nothing against Mr Chillingly Gordon—but my whole nature is antagonistic to his, and even were it not so——”

She stopped abruptly, a deep blush warming up her fair face, and retreating to leave it coldly pale.

LADY GLENALVON (tenderly kissing her): You have not, then, even yet conquered

the first maiden fancy; the ungrateful one is still remembered?

Cecilia bowed her head on her friend's breast, and murmured imploringly, "Don't speak against him, he has been so unhappy. How much he must have loved!"

"But it is not you whom he loved."

"Something here, something at my heart, tells me that he will love me yet; and if not, I am contented to be his friend."

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE the conversation just related took place between Cecilia and Lady Glenalvon, Gordon Chillingly was seated alone with Mivers in the comfortable apartment of the cynical old bachelor. Gordon had breakfasted with his kinsman, but that meal was long over ; the two men having found much to talk about on matters very interesting to the younger, nor without interest to the elder one.

It is true that Chillingly Gordon had, within the very short space of time that had elapsed since his entrance into the House of Commons, achieved one of those reputations which mark out a man for early admission into the progressive career of office—not a

very showy reputation, but a very solid one. He had none of the gifts of the genuine orator, no enthusiasm, no imagination, no imprudent bursts of fiery words from a passionate heart. But he had all the gifts of an exceedingly telling speaker—a clear, metallic voice; well-bred, appropriate action, not less dignified for being somewhat too quiet; readiness for extempore replies; industry and method for prepared expositions of principle or fact. But his principal merit with the chiefs of the assembly was in the strong good sense and worldly tact which made him a safe speaker. For this merit he was largely indebted to his frequent conferences with Chillingly Mivers. That gentleman, owing whether to his social qualities or to the influence of the ‘Londoner’ on public opinion, enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with the chiefs of all parties, and was up to his ears in the wisdom of the world. “Nothing,” he would say, “hurts a young Parliamentary speaker like violence in opinion, one way or the other. Shun it. Always

allow that much may be said on both sides. When the chiefs of your own side suddenly adopt a violence, you can go with them or against them, according as best suits your own book."

"So," said Mivers, reclined on his sofa, and approaching the end of his second Trabuco (he never allowed himself more than two), "so I think we have pretty well settled the tone you must take in your speech to-night. It is a great occasion."

"True. It is the *first* time in which the debate has been arranged so that I may speak at ten o'clock or later. That in itself is a great leap; and it is a Cabinet Minister whom I am to answer—luckily, he is a very dull fellow. Do you think I might hazard a joke—at least a witticism?"

"At his expense? Decidedly not. Though his office compels him to introduce this measure, he was by no means in its favour when it was discussed in the Cabinet; and though, as you say, he is dull, it is precisely that sort of dulness which is essential to the forma-

tion of every respectable Cabinet. Joke at *him*, indeed! Learn that gentle dulness never loves a joke—at its own expense. Vain man! seize the occasion which your blame of his measure affords you to secure his praise of yourself: compliment him. Enough of politics. It never does to think too much over what one has already decided to say. Brooding over it, one may become too much in earnest, and commit an indiscretion. So Kenelm has come back?"

"Yes. I heard that news last night, at White's, from Travers. Sir Peter had called on Travers."

"Travers still favours your suit to the heiress?"

"More, I think, than ever. Success in Parliament has great effect on a man who has success in fashion and respects the opinion of clubs. But last night he was unusually cordial. Between you and me, I think he is a little afraid that Kenelm may yet be my rival. I gathered that from a hint he let fall of the unwelcome nature of Sir Peter's talk to him."

“Why has Travers conceived a dislike to poor Kenelm? He seemed partial enough to him once.”

“Ay, but not as a son-in-law, even before I had a chance of becoming so. And when, after Kenelm appeared at Exmundham while Travers was staying there, Travers learned, I suppose from Lady Chillingly, that Kenelm had fallen in love with and wanted to marry some other girl, who it seems rejected him, and still more when he heard that Kenelm had been subsequently travelling on the Continent in company with a low-lived fellow, the drunken, riotous son of a farrier, you may well conceive how so polished and sensible a man as Leopold Travers would dislike the idea of giving his daughter to one so little likely to make an agreeable son-in-law. Bah! I have no fear of Kenelm. By the way, did Sir Peter say if Kenelm had quite recovered his health? He was at death’s door some eighteen months ago, when Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly were summoned to town by the doctors.”

“My dear Gordon, I fear there is no chance of your succession to Exmundham. Sir Peter says that his wandering Hercules is as stalwart as ever, and more equable in temperament, more taciturn and grave—in short, less odd. But when you say you have no fear of Kenelm’s rivalry, do you mean only as to Cecilia Travers?”

“Neither as to that nor as to anything in life; and as to the succession to Exmundham, it is his to leave as he pleases, and I have cause to think he would never leave it to me. More likely to Parson John or the parson’s son—or why not to yourself? I often think that for the prizes immediately set before my ambition I am better off without land: land is a great obfuscator.”

“Humph, there is some truth in that. Yet the fear of land and obfuscation does not seem to operate against your suit to Cecilia Travers?”

“Her father is likely enough to live till I may be contented to ‘rest and be thankful’

in the upper house; and I should not like to be a landless peer."

"You are right there; but I should tell you that, now Kenelm has come back, Sir Peter has set his heart on his son's being your rival."

"For Cecilia?"

"Perhaps; but certainly for Parliamentary reputation. The senior member for the county means to retire, and Sir Peter has been urged to allow his son to be brought forward—from what I hear, with the certainty of success."

"What! in spite of that wonderful speech of his on coming of age?"

"Pooh! that is now understood to have been but a bad joke on the new ideas, and their organs, including the 'Londoner.' But if Kenelm does come into the House, it will not be on your side of the question; and unless I greatly overrate his abilities—which very likely I do—he will not be a rival to despise. Except, indeed, that he may have

one fault which in the present day would be enough to unfit him for public life."

"And what is that fault?"

"Treason to the blood of the Chillinglys. This is the age, in England, when one cannot be too much of a Chillingly. I fear that if Kenelm does become bewildered by a political abstraction—call it, no matter what, say, 'love of his country,' or some such old-fashioned crotchet—I fear—I greatly fear—that he may be—in earnest."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

It was a field night in the House of Commons—an adjourned debate, opened by George Belvoir, who had been, the last two years, very slowly creeping on in the favour, or rather the indulgence of the House, and more than justifying Kenelm's prediction of his career. Heir to a noble name and vast estates, extremely hard-working, very well informed, it was impossible that he should not creep on. That night he spoke sensibly enough, assisting his memory by frequent references to his notes; listened to courteously, and greeted with a faint "Hear hear!" of relief when he had done.

Then the House gradually thinned till

nine o'clock, at which hour it became very rapidly crowded. A cabinet minister had solemnly risen, deposited on the table before him a formidable array of printed papers, including a corpulent blue book. Leaning his arm on the red box, he commenced with this awe-compelling sentence :

“ Sir,— I join issue with the right honourable gentleman opposite. He says this is not raised as a party question. I deny it. Her Majesty’s Government are put upon their trial.”

Here there were cheers, so loudly, and so rarely greeting a speech from that cabinet minister, that he was put out, and had much to “ hum ” and to “ ha,” before he could recover the thread of his speech. Then he went on, with unbroken but lethargic fluency ; read long extracts from the public papers, inflicted a whole page from the blue book, wound up with a peroration of respectable platitudes, glanced at the clock, saw that he had completed the hour which a cabinet minister who does not profess to be

oratorical is expected to speak, but not to exceed; and sat down.

Uprose a crowd of eager faces, from which the Speaker, as previously arranged with the party whips, selected one—a young face, hardy, intelligent, emotionless.

I need not say that it was the face of Chillingly Gordon.

His position that night was one that required dexterous management and delicate tact. He habitually supported the Government; his speeches had been hitherto in their favour. On this occasion he differed from the Government. The difference was known to the chiefs of the opposition, and hence the arrangement of the whips, that he should speak for the first time after ten o'clock, and for the first time in reply to a cabinet minister. It is a position in which a young party man makes or mars his future. Chillingly Gordon spoke from the third row behind the Government; he had been duly cautioned by Mivers not to affect a conceited independence, or an adhesion to "violence"

in ultra-liberal opinions, by seating himself below the gangway. Speaking thus, amid the rank and file of the Ministerial supporters, any opinion at variance with the mouth-pieces of the Treasury bench would be sure to produce a more effective sensation, than if delivered from the ranks of the mutinous Bashi Bazouks divided by the gangway from better disciplined forces. His first brief sentences enthralled the House, conciliated the Ministerial side, kept the opposition side in suspense. The whole speech was, indeed, felicitously adroit, and especially in this, that while in opposition to the Government as a whole, it expressed the opinions of a powerful section of the cabinet, which, though at present a minority, yet being the most enamoured of a New Idea, the progress of the age would probably render a safe investment for the confidence which honest Gordon reposed in its chance of beating its colleagues.

It was not, however, till Gordon had concluded, that the cheers of his audience—

impulsive and hearty as are the cheers of that assembly, when the evidence of intellect is unmistakable — made manifest to the Gallery and the reporters the full effect of the speech he had delivered. The chief of the opposition whispered to his next neighbour, "I wish we could get that man." The cabinet minister whom Gordon had answered—more pleased with a personal compliment to himself than displeased with an attack on the measure his office compelled him to advocate —whispered to his chief, "That is a man we must not lose."

Two gentlemen in the Speaker's gallery, who had sat there from the opening of the debate, now quitted their places. Coming into the lobby, they found themselves commingled with a crowd of members who had also quitted their seats, after Gordon's speech, in order to discuss its merits, as they gathered round the refreshment table for oranges or soda-water. Among them was George Belvoir, who on sight of the younger of the two gentlemen issuing from the Speaker's

Gallery, accosted him with friendly greeting:

"Ha! Chillingly, how are you? Did not know you were in town. Been here all the evening? Yes; very good debate. How did you like Gordon's speech?"

"I liked yours much better."

"Mine!" cried George, very much flattered and very much surprised. "Oh! mine was a mere humdrum affair, a plain statement of the reasons for the vote I should give. And Gordon's was anything but that. You did not like his opinions?"

"I don't know what his opinions are. But I did not like his ideas."

"I don't quite understand you. What ideas?"

"The new ones; by which it is shown how rapidly a great State can be made small."

Here Mr Belvoir was taken aside by a brother member, on an important matter to be brought before the committee on salmon fisheries, on which they both served; and

Kenelm, with his companion, Sir Peter, threaded his way through the crowded lobby, and disappeared. Emerging into the broad space, with its lofty clock tower, Sir Peter halted, and pointing towards the old Abbey, half in shadow, half in light, under the tranquil moonbeams, said :

“It tells much for the duration of a people, when it accords with the instinct of immortality in a man ; when an honoured tomb is deemed recompense for the toils and dangers of a noble life. How much of the history of England Nelson summed up in the simple words : ‘Victory or Westminster Abbey.’

“Admirably expressed, my dear father,” said Kenelm briefly.

“I agree with your remark, which I overheard, on Gordon’s speech,” resumed Sir Peter. “It was wonderfully clever ; yet I should have been sorry to hear you speak it. It is not by such sentiments that Nelsons become great. If such sentiments should ever be national, the cry will not be ‘Vic-

tory or Westminster Abbey!' but 'Defeat and the Three per Cents!' "

Pleased with his own unwonted animation, and with the sympathizing half-smile on his son's taciturn lips, Sir Peter then proceeded more immediately to the subjects which pressed upon his heart. Gordon's success in Parliament, Gordon's suit to Cecilia Travers, favoured, as Sir Peter had learned, by her father, rejected as yet by herself, were somehow inseparably mixed up in Sir Peter's mind and his words, as he sought to kindle his son's emulation. He dwelt on the obligations which a country imposed on its citizens, especially on the young and vigorous generation to which the destinies of those to follow were entrusted; and with these stern obligations he combined all the cheering and tender associations which an English public man connects with an English home: the wife with a smile to soothe the cares, and a mind to share the aspirations, of a life that must go through labour to achieve renown; thus, in all he said, binding

together, as if they could not be disparted, Ambition and Cecilia.

His son did not interrupt him by a word : Sir Peter in his eagerness not noticing that Kenelm had drawn him aside from the direct thoroughfare, and had now made halt in the middle of Westminster Bridge, bending over the massive parapet and gazing abstractedly upon the waves of the starlit river. On the right the stately length of the people's legislative palace, so new in its date, so elaborately in each detail ancient in its form, stretching on towards the lowly and jagged roofs of penury and crime. Well might these be so near to the halls of a people's legislative palace ;—near to the heart of every legislator for a people must be the mighty problem how to increase a people's splendour and its virtue, and how to diminish its penury and its crime.

“How strange it is,” said Kenelm, still bending over the parapet, “that throughout all my desultory wanderings I have ever been attracted towards the sight and the

sound of running waters, even those of the humblest rill! Of what thoughts, of what dreams, of what memories, colouring the history of my past, the waves of the humblest rill could speak, were the waves themselves not such supreme philosophers—roused indeed on their surface, vexed by a check to their own course, but so indifferent to all that makes gloom or death to the mortals who think and dream and feel beside their banks.”

“Bless me,” said Sir Peter to himself, “the boy has got back to his old vein of humours and melancholies. He has not heard a word I have been saying. Travers is right. He will never do anything in life. Why did I christen him Kenelm? he might as well have been christened Peter.” Still, loth to own that his eloquence had been expended in vain, and that the wish of his heart was doomed to expire disappointed, Sir Peter said aloud, “You have not listened to what I said; Kenelm, you grieve me.”

“Grieve you! you! do not say that,

father, dear father. Listen to you! Every word you have said has sunk into the deepest deep of my heart. Pardon my foolish purposeless snatch of talk to myself, it is but my way, only my way, dear father!"

"Boy, boy," cried Sir Peter, with tears in his voice, "if you could get out of those odd ways of yours I should be so thankful. But if you cannot, nothing you can do shall grieve me. Only, let me say this; running waters have had a great charm for you. With a humble rill you associate thoughts, dreams, memories in your past. But now you halt by the stream of the mighty river—before you the senate of an empire wider than Alexander's; behind you the market of a commerce to which that of Tyre was a pitiful trade. Look farther down, those squalid hovels, how much there to redeem or to remedy; and out of sight, but not very distant, the nation's Walhalla: 'Victory or Westminster Abbey!' The humble rill has witnessed your past. Has the mighty

river no effect on your future? The rill keeps no record of your past, shall the river keep no record of your future? Ah, boy, boy, I see you are dreaming still—no use talking. Let us go home.”

“I was not dreaming, I was telling myself that the time had come to replace the old Kenelm with the new ideas, by a New Kenelm with the Ideas of Old. Ah! perhaps we must—at whatever cost to ourselves,—we must go through the romance of life before we clearly detect what is grand in its realities. I can no longer lament that I stand estranged from the objects and pursuits of my race. I have learned how much I have with them in common. I have known love; I have known sorrow.”

Kenelm paused a moment, only a moment, then lifted the head which, during that pause, had drooped, and stood erect at the full height of his stature; startling his father by the change that had passed over his face; lip—eye—his whole aspect eloquent with a

resolute enthusiasm, too grave to be the flash of a passing moment.

“Ay, ay,” he said, “Victory or Westminster Abbey! The world is a battle-field in which the worst wounded are the deserters, stricken as they seek to fly, and hushing the groans that would betray the secret of their inglorious hiding-place. The pain of wounds received in the thick of the fight, is scarcely felt in the joy of service to some honoured cause, and is amply atoned by the reverence for noble scars. My choice is made. Not that of deserter, that of soldier in the ranks.”

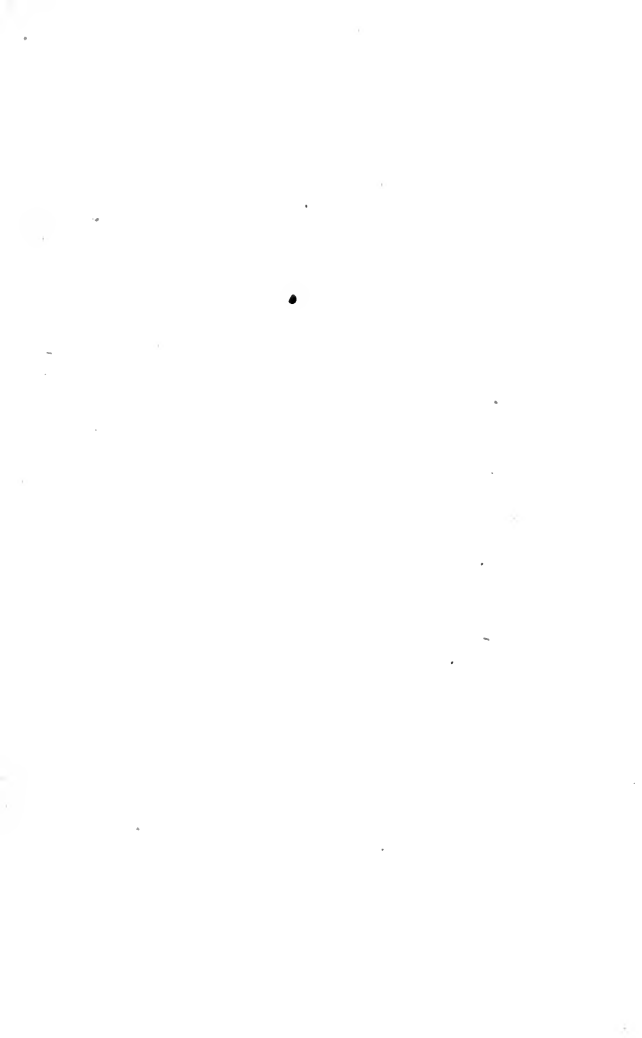
“It will not be long before you rise from the ranks, my boy, if you hold fast to the Idea of Old, symbolised in the English battle-cry: ‘Victory or Westminster Abbey.’”

So saying, Sir Peter took his son's arm, leaning on it proudly; and so, into the crowded thoroughfares, from the halting place on the modern bridge that spans the legend-

ary river, passes the Man of the Young Generation to fates beyond the verge of the horizon to which the eyes of *my* generation must limit their wistful gaze.

THE END.





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